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Hi-Tech Pearl Harbor, by Robert B. Reich

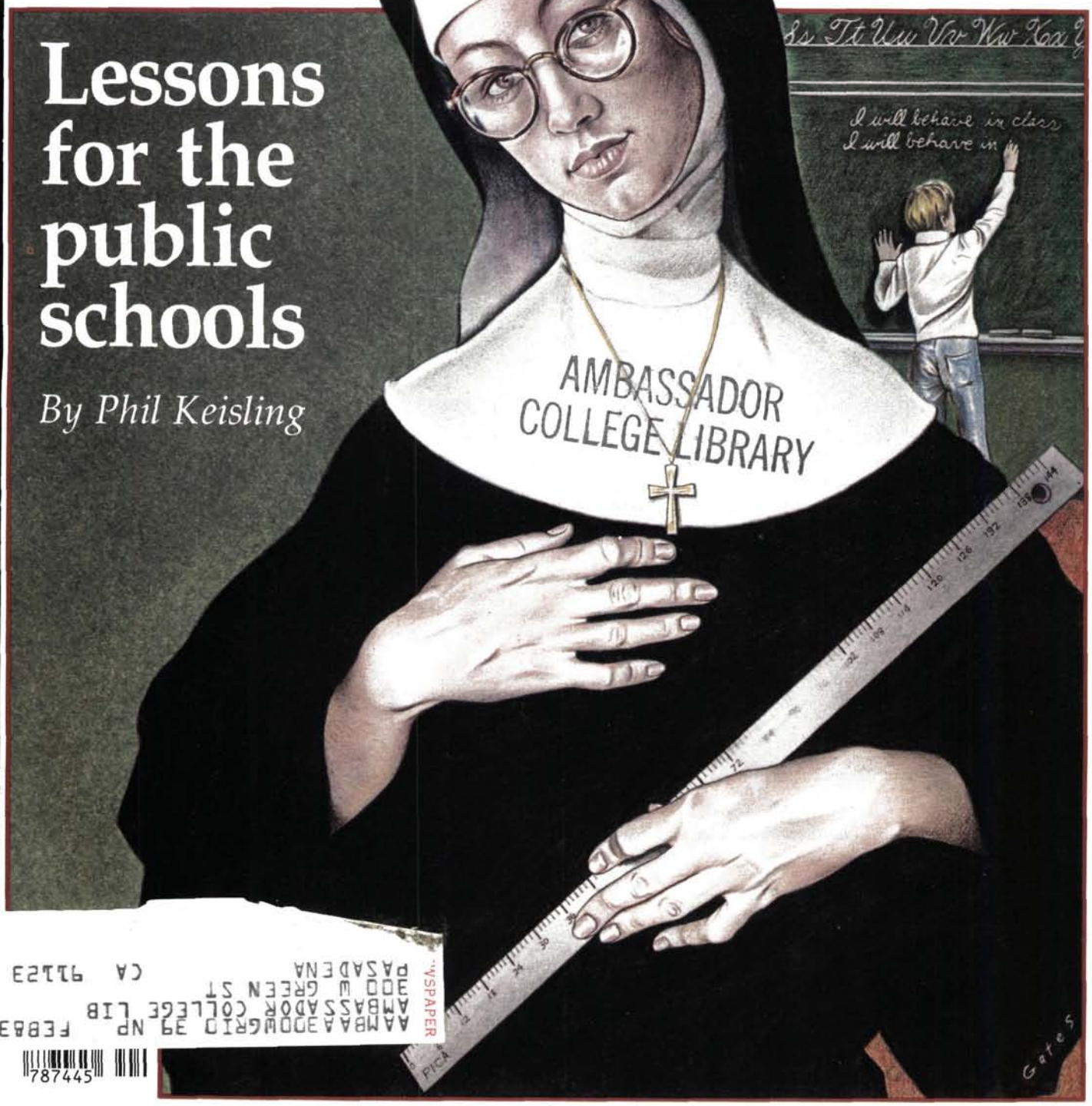
R.W.B. Lewis on Irving Howe • Stocks Up, Jobs Down

THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCT 2 2 1982

Lessons for the public schools

By Phil Keisling



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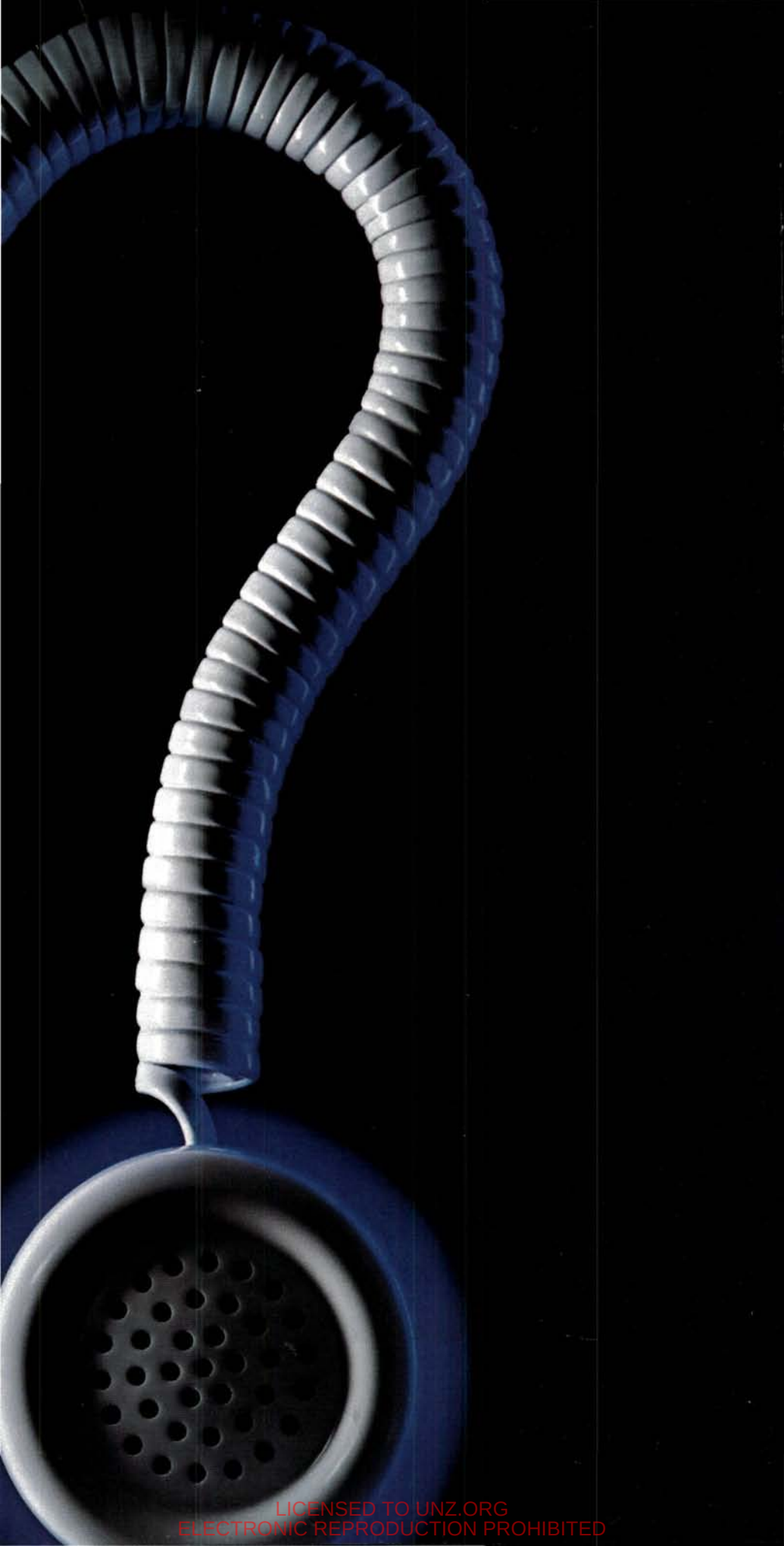

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Where is the Bell System going?

Nothing has done so much to change the world we live in as the telephone.

Yet the basic operating principles of the Bell System itself have changed very little over the past hundred years.

It was all because we had a single overriding goal: universal service. Dependable service at reasonable rates for everyone who wanted it.

And in order to achieve this goal, telephone exchanges were established as exclusive franchises and were permitted to operate without competition. But the government strictly regulated our rates and profits.

Today, 96% of the nation's homes have phone service.

So now America and the Bell System can change old goals for new ones.

The regulators and legislators of this country are looking more to the marketplace and competition–rather than regulation–to decide who will provide competitive services and equipment and how they will be priced.

The biggest force behind this change has been new technology which has changed the very nature of telecommunications.

We are on the threshold of a new era. The Information Age. The technology of communications has gradually merged with that of computers. And the marriage of these two technologies offers the potential for an impressive array of new customer services.

However, the blending of these two technologies has also blurred the boundaries between a traditionally regulated business–communications–and the unregulated data-processing industry.

This circumstance has led to some major rethinking of public policies on telecommunications.

Policies to which the Bell System must conform.

And in order to conform, the Bell System must change.

To begin with, the Bell telephone companies will have to be separated from their parent company, AT&T. Among other things, these local operating companies will continue to provide basic local service under state regulation, and they'll serve as the gateway to the new Information Age.

Because it is being thrust into a marketplace that is intensely competitive, AT&T–the parent company–is also going to change. The task of bringing these changes about is an enormous one. But we are determined to make the transition a smooth one.

AT&T will continue to create and provide new products and services to meet your changing needs. And Western Electric, Bell Labs and Long Lines will continue to remain vital parts of AT&T.

We want to keep our customers, shareowners and employees informed every step of the way. So along with your local Bell telephone company, we'll be talking with you in ads like this about varying aspects of the coming changes.

It's all part of the "Let's Talk" program set up by the Bell System.

Each ad will have a number to call: 1 800 555-5000.

There'll be somebody to talk to. Somebody to help you. Somebody to answer your questions. Somebody to get you information.

So call us. And we'll be talking to you.

Let's talk.

Bell System

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CORRESPONDENCE

BEIRUT BACKLASH

To the editors:

In your editorial, "The Horror in Beirut" (TNR, October 11), you are scrupulous in your assignment of responsibility. I commend you for your nice discriminations and your uncompromising condemnation of Begin's government in this matter. As an Eastern Orthodox Christian, however, I am shocked by your indiscriminate use of the word "Christian" to describe political factions of a particular Christian derivation in Lebanon. Other "Christians" may well become tainted by your poison brush.

It would have been more honest and more accurate to designate the killers at Sabra and Shatila as "Israel's allies." If that term seems unfair, re-examine your consistent choice of the word "Christian" in your reports from Lebanon.

ANTHONY UGOLNIK
Collegeville, Minnesota

To the editors:

Did the editors of TNR ask President Nixon or any of his generals to resign because of the My Lai massacre? Of course not. The perpetrators of the killings are those who should be punished, not those who either misdiagnosed the situation or were ignorant of it. Lieutenant Calley was brought to trial for My Lai, not General Westmoreland, and rightfully so. American law and the laws of free countries are based on a presumption of innocence. But when it comes to judging Israel, the whole world, and now even the editors of TNR, make a presumption of guilt. It pains me deeply that TNR has now become what it brilliantly exposes in others—hypocrites toward Israel.

KENNETH SIDMAN
Brookline, Massachusetts

ASSESSING DICTATORSHIPS

To the editors:

Stanley G. Payne's review of Jeane J. Kirkpatrick's book ("The Authoritarian Century," TNR, October 11) seems to accept her distinction between totalitarian (mostly Communist) and authoritarian regimes, and then reminds us that "relations with any dictatorship need to be carefully assessed in terms of overall advantages, liabilities, and alternatives." But I wonder if Ambassador Kirkpatrick's socializing with the Argentines on the eve of their invasion of the Falkland Islands qualifies as such an assessment of advantages. In fact, the Reagan Administration's warmth toward the Argentine junta, after Carter's chill, may have led them to believe that they could invade with impunity.

I further wonder whether, after lifting the U.S. grain embargo to totalitarian Russia, Reagan's objecting to our European allies' helping to build the Siberian pipeline qualifies as an example of Professor Payne's "coherent and consistent overall strategy."

One might argue that Reagan's courting of the likes of President Marcos of the Philippines recently and earlier the Argentine junta, our authoritarians, without reference to the political prisoners in their jails, is a form of political appeasement. Only opposition to political thuggery on the left and on the right will be a coherent and consistent overall strategy.

E. MILTON MCDONALD
Fayetteville, North Carolina

THE ORIGIN OF DARWINISM

To the editors:

Robert Reich's stark appraisal of Ronald Reagan's social Darwinism ("Ideologies of Survival," TNR, September 20 & 27), interested me not only as an emigrant from Margaret Thatcher's revision of it, but as a zoologist. There is an ironic twist to the term itself.

The Theory of Evolution was proposed jointly by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace at a meeting of the Linnean Society of London in 1858. Recent research by Arnold Brackman (*A Delicate Arrangement*, Times Books, 1980) strongly suggests that Darwin stole (not too harsh a word) the theory from Wallace, who had sent his paper on the subject from Ternate in the Malay Archipelago to Darwin in England. If this is so, and bearing in mind that Darwin was already well-known, heir to Wedgewood money, and part of the scientific establishment of the day, whereas Wallace was unknown, poor, and unconnected, social Darwinism seems even more appropriate as a phrase, Wallace being its first victim.

Wallace, who understood the mechanisms of survival in living organisms better than anyone at the time, undoubtedly would have had no sympathy with their application to human society. During a tour of America in the 1880s he wrote: " . . . That mad race for wealth in which they have broken the record, and have produced a greater number of multi-millionaires than all the rest of the world combined, with . . . disastrous results. To allow one child to be born a millionaire and another a pauper is a crime against humanity, and for those who believe in a deity, a crime against God."

KENNETH ORTON WILLIAMS
San Francisco, California

SNOB APPEAL (CONT.)

To the editors:

If the level of information reflected in Paul Fussell's paragraph on Southern Illinois University at Carbondale is a fair sample of his grasp of the subject ("Schools for Snobbery," TNR, October 4), I urge you to commission other pieces. He can only improve.

The essence of his lament is that "the majority of bachelor's degrees issued by Southern Illinois University are still in 'education. . . .'" The statistic is a bit dated—by forty years or so. In 1982 we granted some 4,062 bachelor's degrees, of which 601 were in education. Assuming that Professor Fussell can manage the arithmetic, he will discover that, even by today's tolerant editorial standards, the resulting percentage hardly constitutes a "majority." To add to Professor Fussell's manifestly scanty information bank, I should also mention that Southern Illinois University at Carbondale is fully accredited (including business, engineering, law, medicine, etc.), and offers doctoral degrees in twenty-two disciplines and master's in sixty-four.

Still, to be fair, his subject matter mastery is no worse than his logic. He finds it inconceivable that a university press should be located in a "sad backwater." Despite this alleged handicap, the SIU Press is one of the most respected in the country—as well as one of the largest.

As for the "sad backwater"—we would be delighted to have Professor Fussell visit Carbondale and see for himself. But he would risk a firsthand familiarity with his subject—a danger he has so far apparently quite successfully avoided.

ALBERT SOMIT
President, Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois

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FROM WASHINGTON

Mondale's Fire

Just before Ronald Reagan reassured the nation again last week that he is smoothing out the economy, that the recession is going away, and that despite 10.1 percent unemployment the stock market is doing fine, former Vice President Fritz Mondale took a bold step. He came right out on "This Week with David Brinkley" on October 10 and demanded a $10 billion cut in defense expenditures. The nation must put its financial house in order, he said, and this is one of the ways to do it. You could hear the Pentagon's window panes rattle across the Potomac.

Mondale is running for the Presidency, and he might even get it. I will come back to him in a minute. Meanwhile, as indicated by the bold proposal to cut the U.S. arms budget, the peace movement seems to be growing. Twenty-five organizations claiming up to twenty million members have formed a new national alliance here to fight for a nuclear freeze. Terry Herndon, executive director of the National Education Association, heads it. The first biennial conference, "On the Fate of the Earth," will be held from October 19 to 21 at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. And this follows an earlier call sent out by the Pontifical Academy of the Sciences at the Vatican inviting representatives of the major academies of science over the world to sign peace appeals, "due to the growth of mistrust and suspicion and to the ever increasing arms race." Nations were urged "never to be the first to use nuclear weapons." Such declarations don't mean much, but they do display a growing feeling of urgency.

As for politics, the 1984 Presidential race has already started, and Mondale is an interesting example of how it's done. He has been at it for some time. He came to the Senate by appointment in 1964 to fill the unexpired term of the newly elected Vice President, Hubert Humphrey. He lacked flamboyance, but this column reported on March 4, 1972, after covering hearings at which he presided, "As we have said before, we rate Mondale of Presidential caliber." He was fine on committee details, but did he have sufficient frenzy and fire? The public looked at him questioningly on "Meet the Press" on September 30, 1973, during the Nixon scandals. He was an honest, decent man with remarkable calm; boldly confident but low-keyed. They liked him, but what about charisma? Meanwhile he continued holding hearings that dealt with poverty and children and education. He sat alone at the head table taking testimony on, of all things, the American family. Witnesses said that a million U.S. preschool children lived in families below the poverty line, that the U.S. was below thirteen other nations in combating infant mortality. How old-fashioned he looked there, taking testimony by himself. He was an oddly impressive figure.

On "Meet the Press" they asked him if he were running for the Presidency. I thought he would duck. He replied simply that he had been asked the same thing before. "I saw no reason to be cute about it, and I said yes, I was, and that I was talking to people around the country. I am in a very preliminary stage," he said, "in terms of my own future." He told about the Presidential adventure in his 1975 book, *The Accountability of Power*, and he became a Presidential drop-out in these memorable words: "Basically I found I did not have the overwhelming desire to be President which is essential for the kind of campaign that is required. I don't think anyone should be President who is not willing to go through fire."

One problem was that he liked the Senate. He thinks excitement in U.S. government could be vastly increased if the Senate could summon Cabinet officials and agency heads to defend their actions on the floor, in full view of the American people. "If a Cabinet officer must defend policy before the nation, he will insist that he has a role in the formulation of that policy from the outset," Mondale wrote, back in the 1970s.

Ultimately, of course, Jimmy Carter picked Mondale as his running mate in 1976, and the two men were closer in their jobs than any other executive pair in modern times.

The question is whether Mondale is now willing to do what he says he was not willing to do before: to "go through fire." The answer appears to be that he is. He is also much better equipped to do it. His television voice and manner are vastly improved. He was the dominant figure on "This Week with David Brinkley" last week as he faced difficult questions. Will he have Democratic opposition as he seeks the nomination? Of course. There may be a field of a dozen or so. But he may note that a Yankelovitch/*Time* poll last year gave him a 71 percent approval rating among Democrats; Edward Kennedy came in second at 55 percent.

Is his relationship with Carter a liability? Probably, even though Carter may now be in for something of a comeback. As to the present, Mondale attacks the Reagan economic program in unequivocal terms: "These policies are not working. Things are not getting better, they are getting worse."

Reagan says the opposite, and we have a sharp debate. What's Mondale's proposal? "We've got to get those interest rates down," he says. To do this deficits must be reduced. The first proposal is "slow down the rate of defense spending increase by about $10 billion; I think that could be responsibly done."

He would repeal the 1983 Reagan tax cut for people earning over $60,000 a year. He would work out a deal with the Federal Reserve Board whereby the board would continue bringing down interest rates in return for smaller Congressional deficits. The most significant way to reduce the deficit right now, he says, is to get some growth: if we could get unemployment down 2 percent, he says, "that will reduce the deficit by $60 billion." And he speaks like a Presidential candidate. There is quiet conviction. He is not, like Reagan, a dilettante with figures.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
NOVEMBER 1, 1982

OUT OF WORK

"Jobs, jobs, jobs" was the slogan that Ronald Reagan ran and got elected on two years ago. He promised a reversal of the Republican Party's traditional preoccupation with inflation, interest rates, and the stock market—rich people's issues—and a new dedication to the well-being of the ordinary people of America. Mr. Reagan didn't lie during the 1980 campaign, but he told a falsehood. He really believed that a combination of huge tax cuts, "monetary restraint," and deregulation would unleash a mighty surge of productive growth in the private economy, creating millions of new and lasting jobs. "Work and family are at the center of our lives," Mr. Reagan told the 1980 Republican Convention. "When we deprive people of what they have earned, or take away their jobs, we destroy their dignity and undermine their families. We cannot support our families unless there are jobs; and we cannot have jobs unless people have both money to invest and the faith to invest it."

Judged by his own standards, Mr. Reagan's economic policies stand two years later as a massive failure. In July 1980, when Mr. Reagan accepted the Republican nomination—declaring that "thanks to the economic policies of the Democratic Party, millions of Americans find themselves out of work"—the unemployment rate was 7.8 percent. It fell to 7.4 percent by the time Mr. Reagan was inaugurated. It continued to fall, in fact, to 7.2 percent in July 1981. Now, as everyone knows, 10.1 percent of the workforce is unemployed. There are 11.3 million people in the country actively looking for work. Another 1.5 million are estimated to be so discouraged by their inability to find work that they no longer try. Six million others have part-time jobs but want to work longer. In 1982 nearly one-third of all U.S. workers—30 million persons—will experience some period of unemployment. These are people whose dignity is being destroyed and whose families are being undermined.

With the midterm elections at hand, the President has to find good news where he can. He finds it where Republicans often have found it in the past—in falling inflation and interest rates, and in a stock market boom. Mr. Reagan's Treasury Secretary, Donald Regan, says all this means that "the stage is set for an economic recovery which will reduce the unemployment rate and create real jobs." Poor Mr. Regan has been predicting recovery for months now, but there has been no recovery, and many analysts think that there will be none worthy of the name. As one investment expert told *The Washington Post*, when the stock market shot over the 1,000 mark: "The market is not going up because of Reaganomics. The market is going up because of falling interest rates, and the interest rates are declining because the economy is in such bad shape. The market is bubbling because of his failure."

Mr. Reagan's failure occurred for the very reasons that liberal economists predicted it would: his was an economic policy at war with itself. It was a policy of flooring the accelerator with tax cuts and slamming on the brake with high interest rates. The brake has proved stronger. If Mr. Reagan can take credit (along with Fed chairman Paul Volcker) for reducing inflation from the 12.4 percent to the present 5.1 percent, he cannot simultaneously transfer blame for unemployment to the Democrats. Mr. Reagan fought inflation with unemployment. Unemployment won.

As liberals, we have always detested this Republican tactic, but Mr. Reagan's use of it is especially harmful. Reaganomics not only has produced the worst recession since the Depression; it may actually have produced a new depression, a self-sustaining slump from which there will be no recovery. Mr. Reagan's huge tax cuts were supposed to produce investment in job-creating new plant and equipment, but they did not. Instead, they helped produce such yawning federal deficits—$175 billion is the projection for next year—that real interest rates are almost guaranteed to remain so high as to discourage borrowing for investment.

Why should anyone invest in new plant, when 30 percent of America's existing industrial capacity

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stands idle? Why should people take long-term risks when (until just recently) they could earn 15 percent or more in a money market fund, or pay off debts to escape even higher rates on their borrowing? Corporations didn't invest tax-cut money any more than individuals did. They used it (and borrowed more) just to stay in business, or squandered it on mergers. Even with interest rates falling precipitously, there is no sign that recovery is on the way. People are not buying cars and houses, presumably because they do not know how bad the economy is going to get. If the recession deepens, federal deficits will grow because unemployment costs rise and tax revenues fall, putting upward pressure on interest rates. There is no guarantee, furthermore, that the current drop in interest rates is anything more than temporary. Even *The Wall Street Journal* suspects that Mr. Volcker may have loosened his grip on the money supply only temporarily hoping to prevent an electoral disaster for his economic ally in the White House.

SO THE STAGE may be set not for recovery but for permanent recession, with high interest rates fueling joblessness, and joblessness feeding federal deficits and higher interest rates in a deepening spiral of misery. With his precious supply-side program reduced to tatters, President Reagan seems immobilized, incapable of envisioning ways to get the economy out of the doldrums. His election-year tactic is to beg for patience, fiddle with statistics to minimize his failures, and pin as much blame as possible on the Democrats. To listen to the Republicans, one would think this Administration had been in office only since July 1, when the second year of President Reagan's tax cuts went into effect. But the truth, of course, is that President Reagan had gotten his big tax cuts and domestic budget cuts through Congress by the end of July 1981—which is just about exactly when the economy's current nosedive began. Ronald Reagan may not be responsible for all 10.1 percent of the unemployment rate, but he certainly is responsible for the 2.9 percent that it has risen since July 1981, and for his failure to bring it down, as promised, from the levels at which he found it on taking office.

The Administration lately has been trying to limit its responsibility by changing the basis upon which we judge unemployment. Double-digit unemployment is not as serious as it might seem, say the Reaganites, when you consider how many women and teenagers are now in the labor market. They say that the proper "full employment" base is 6.5 percent unemployment, not the traditional 4 to 5 percent, meaning that in the current recession, "real" unemployment is only 3.6 percent—regrettable, but not as catastrophic as 5 or 6 percent would be. Yet what the Administration doesn't say is that the reason most women are in the labor force is that they have to be—either because inflation and debts have made it necessary to have a second household income, or because the woman is the head of a single-parent household. Unemployment in such circumstances is just as disastrous as it was in the days when almost all breadwinners were males.

Instead of hoping for miracles and trying to deflect responsibility for what's occurred, the Administration ought to be looking for ways to move the economy out of its slough. Over the short term, the economy needs a swift Keynesian kick and the unemployed need a helping hand. Over the long term, the country needs an industrial policy that will retrain workers, rebuild plant, and redirect investment so that the U.S. can face a future of fierce international competition. The Administration has reluctantly agreed to some minimal short-term measures, including extended unemployment benefits and a new compromise job-training bill forced on it by Congressional Democrats. However, there is every reason to believe that the Administration agreed to these moves out of political desperation, not out of conviction or compassion. This Administration previously cut unemployment benefits, job training, research, and education budgets. There is every indication that it will return to that sock-the-poor agenda once the 1982 elections are over, if it possibly can. Next week, in our election issue, we will propose ways for voters to make it clear on November 2 that they want a new agenda.

Bum Rap

If Ronald Reagan did not exist, the peace movement would have to invent him. It has no better shill. The immense popularity of the nuclear freeze idea—an idea simple enough to be immensely popular—owes much to the President's casual comments about nuclear war, to which he seemed quite hospitable. Now the President has done it again. He told a group of veterans in Columbus, Ohio, that the movement "that has swept across our country . . . was inspired not by the sincere, honest people who want peace, but by some who want the weakening of America and so are manipulating many honest and sincere people." The veterans cheered, forgetting, perhaps, that there will be no veterans of a nuclear war; there will be only survivors. The President's remark quickly became famous, making it more likely that many of those who voted with their feet for the freeze will now be joined by even more who will vote with their hands.

They will do so because the freeze is on the ballot this November in nine states, including California and Massachusetts, and in many localities. This is the political context in which the President's remark was made. He has abandoned his "Presidential" attitude of

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last year, when he cleverly fought one freeze idea with another, and has adopted a partisan party attitude. The reason is clear. The fortunes of the freeze at the polls will certainly affect the fortunes of the Pentagon in Congress. The President's defense budget is under attack from all sides. He has been betrayed by big business, which sees national security from the profits point of view, and now the people may make it politically unprofitable for members of Congress not to betray him as well. The President, in other words, is running a little scared.

His slur on the freeze movement is a confession of political weakness, but it is a confession of intellectual weakness as well. It is an intellectual weakness the President shares with many of the movement's critics—and with many members of the movement, too. This weakness is the refusal to meet ideas with ideas; more precisely, it is the attempt to discredit ideas by discrediting the people who hold them. Since the freeze idea is supported by people ranging from Daniel Patrick Moynihan to Jane Fonda, it obviously means different things to different people; in its usual form, however, it specifies a mutual, verifiable, negotiated freeze on the development, manufacture, and deployment of nuclear weapons. Such a freeze, we have argued, cannot be achieved; either it will not be mutual (in which case, presumably, many of its supporters will drop their support), or it will not be verifiable. The idea is only an exercise in wishfulness, which drains political energy from practical paths to arms control. But if the proponents of the freeze are wrong, they are nothing worse.

The President, however, feels they are much worse. He claims they are for the weakening of America. He does not understand that they have a different notion of what makes America strong. He would do better to make arguments against their notion, and not allegations. He would do better, in short, not to debase the debate. Obviously there are some who support the freeze because they are opposed to American power; and there is a pathetic remnant of Soviet fellow-travelers who want a weak America. But they are, no less obviously, a small part of a large movement. The President tarred the entire movement with his old reddening brush. His allegations rely upon no evidence; they rely only upon the willingness of people to believe them. There is a type of patriot who cannot really tolerate democracy, who already knows that those who disagree with him do not have the country's interest at heart. Senator Jeremiah Denton is such a patriot. He accused a peace group in which several Senate wives are prominent of working with organizations that are "either Soviet-controlled or openly sympathetic with, and advocates for, Communist foreign policy objectives." Lies, all. (*The Washington Post* fell for some of these lies, too, though this time it apologized.)

This may be the stuff of which McCarthyism was made, but we are a long way from McCarthyism. The anxious reaction of many of the left is unwarranted by the President's nasty remark and the Senator's nastier remark; no one is being punished for supporting a freeze, and many are being rewarded. Besides, the charge is odious because it is false, not because nobody has a right to make it. The consequence of this charge will be only to make discussion of a difficult issue even more difficult, and to add perverse prestige to a proposal that lacks merit. Mr. Reagan's own proposals for arms reductions have some merit; he would do better to pursue them seriously than to impugn the motives of those who honestly disagree.

Jaruzelski's Second Coup

The Polish regime has now formally outlawed Solidarity for the same reason that millions of Poles joined it: because they saw it not only as a genuine trade union, but also as an instrument for transforming an atomized society. For a people forced to endure hardships, lies, hypocrisy, and foreign domination, Solidarity became the vessel of hope. For the first time in the history of Communist rule, ordinary citizens claimed the right to help create their present and their future. This was an intolerable challenge to Poland's rulers and to the Kremlin. Even as they found themselves forced to deal with Solidarity, they resolved to undo it.

Whether Solidarity could have averted its fate, and whether it could have compelled the party to come to terms with representative institutions, are questions that cannot be answered with any degree of certainty. What is certain is that by the time martial law was declared, the chances that the Communist leadership would willingly accede to the demands of the people had been buried. Jaruzelski did not "suspend" Solidarity as a prelude to restoring it. Over the past ten months, his policies have had one aim: to wear down his opponents, to foster a climate of hopelessness and helplessness, to disabuse his countrymen of any illusions that the system could be reformed. The government's claim that it had tried to enter into a "dialogue" with Solidarity is a lie. On December 13, 1981, Jaruzelski set out to pave the way for the inevitable. The coup d'etat was to be succeeded by a coup de grace. This is the true meaning of the formal dissolution of Solidarity, and of the establishment of new "unions," completely subordinated to the Communist Party.

Will it work? The Poles have already given their answer. The recent mass demonstrations in Gdansk, where Solidarity was born, and the call for a general strike on November 10, issued by the union's underground leadership, are testimony to the tenacious loyalty that Solidarity inspires and to the contempt in

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which the regime is held by its subjects. But faith and anger are no match for tanks and bayonets. Indeed, if unrest spreads—as it may—the Polish people may face even uglier realities than before. The possibility of Soviet troops drowning a popular insurrection in blood cannot be ruled out.

The West cannot be silent. Moscow must be made to understand that any direct military intervention will invite the most severe reprisals. As far as the Polish government is concerned, the West must do what it can—which, unhappily, isn't much. The new sanctions announced by President Reagan, however laudable as an expression of outrage, are not enough. Since no new credits are now being extended to Poland, Western banks and governments must concentrate on the instruments at their disposal—namely, using the negotiations on repayment of Poland's mammoth debt to extract whatever political concessions can be extracted, all the while making it clear that the West's patience is not infinite. This may seem like a paltry measure, but it is realistic. Furthermore, it will have an effect on the morale of the Polish people—if and when this (and possibly other similar measures, yet to be explored) is accompanied by concerted actions of individuals and organizations representing Western public opinion.

No doubt there will be those who will say that public opinion, too, counts for little. Yet we have learned over the past few months that for the Polish people, determined to keep the country's spirit intacts and faced with years of underground struggle, expression of support from trade unions, professional organizations, political parties, and the media are of real value. Jarulzelski and his Soviet patrons have dealt a savage blow to the organization that incarnated Poland's faith. But they have yet to destroy the faith itself.

NOTEBOOK

□ THE FRENCH HAVE RETURNED to Lebanon for the second time in two months to show that France is still a great power. But it is also only fair that French soldiers incur some risks in keeping the Lebanese from their habit of sectarian mass homicide. Lebanon was invented in Paris almost sixty years ago. Like most colonial powers, France was indifferent to the demographic realities of the nation it was trying to fashion. What was designed to French specifications was *Grand Liban*, in which Moslems and Christians, hostile for centuries, would have to share power and keep peace. A predominantly Christian and smaller *Petit Liban* would have left most Moslems as members of the overwhelmingly Moslem body politic of Greater Syria. But it would not have met the momentary needs of the French empire. Italy's current presence in Lebanon has no such historic justification. Nor is there any question of trying to show that Italy is a great power; even in the theater of Middle Eastern politics, there are limits to the absurd. The Italian authorities are delighted merely to be noticed. In the event, the U.S. has been forced to depend on them to prevent terrorism in Beirut, a function they cannot perform at home. Come to think of it, neither can the French, who are still unable, after many months and years, to put a stop to terrorism in Paris.

□ THIS SEASON'S STAR on the right is Professor Jeffrey Hart of Dartmouth, former speechwriter for Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, and author of *When the Going Was Good!*, a hit-and-run history of the 1950s, according to which "Elvis had a remarkable pelvis" and Lionel Trilling lacked the courage to be a conservative. Professor Hart has recently been named to the National Endowment for the Humanities, so he deserves some attention. We are on the case. Last month he praised as "a latter-day Tocqueville" a man who argues that social status is based upon differences that are genetically transmitted. And now he has a good word for those who compare Israelis to Nazis. "Comparing someone with Hitler is probably rhetorical—'I don't like you'—rather than problematically genocidal." Okay, Professor Hart. You are like Hitler.

□ IN A WORLD THAT often seems split between authoritarians and totalitarians, there was one promising development to welcome this week. After two years of corrupt military rule, and almost two decades without a popularly chosen leader, Bolivia welcomed the inauguration of a democratically elected president, Hernan Siles Zuago, on October 10. To stay in power, Mr. Siles will have to revitalize a near-bankrupt economy (without, one assumes, promoting Bolivia's enormous cocaine trade, as previous regimes have done). The chief threat to the new government will continue to be from its own military. U.S. help will be critical in fending off future juntas. President Reagan may hesitate to give full backing to a government that has Communists in two minor cabinet posts, but if the Administration is serious about encouraging global democracy, it will give this new addition to the truly free world all the material and moral support it needs and deserves.

□ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "George Jean Nathan returns to the literary marketplace with a full carpetbag of spirited anecdote and sententious observation. His usual stock-in-trade is this time augmented by a lively series of barroom portraits of his scrivening friends: Sinclair Lewis soaked in Pilsner delivering daffy orations in a mish-mash of *Plattdeutsch* and Main Street; Eugene O'Neill in his three-dollar-a-

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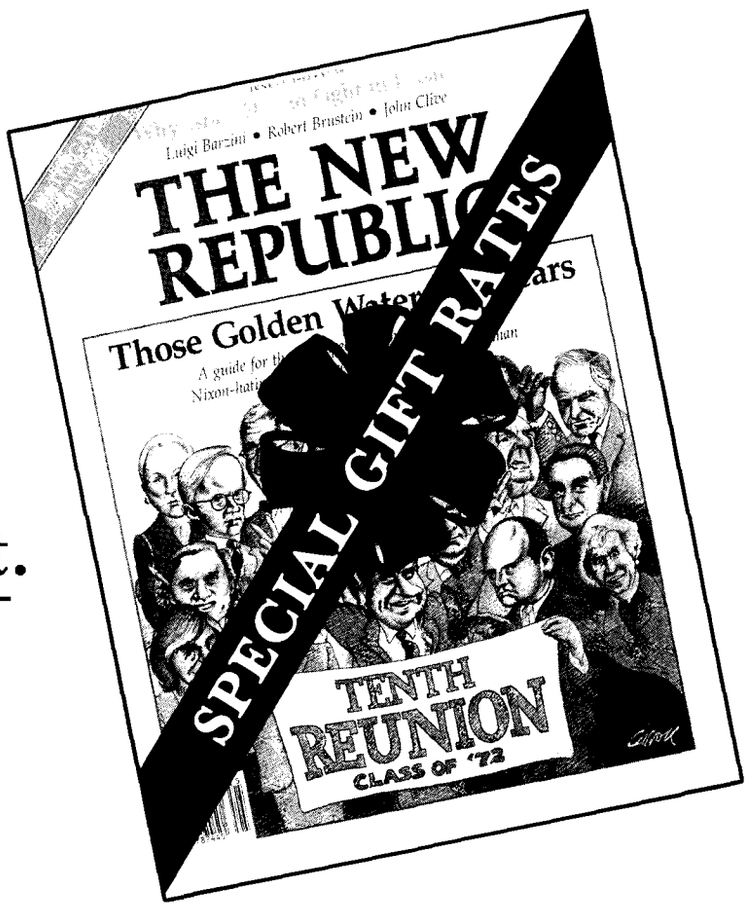

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month 'garbage flat' guzzling alcohol mixed with camphor, varnish diluted with water, wood alcohol flavored with sarsaparilla or benzine; Theodore Dreiser, serious *Saufbruder*, humorless as a Volga boatman; Ernest Boyd, habitual week-ender and bon vivant, behind the apostolic curtain of his beard; H. L. Mencken victimized by hay fever and hemorrhoids." (Brief review of *The Intimate Notebooks of George Jean Nathan*, November 2, 1932.)

THE GILDED AGE

LINEBACKER LABOR

IN YOUNG AMERICA, as in old Rome, games are an integral part of the system of governance. The difference is that while we can see how what Juvenal called *panis* is needed as a political tool, we are oblivious when the other half of the formula—*circenses*—is worked on us. Yet any inquiring foreigners curious about where civic interest and political participation have fled would conclude that much of the energy, enthusiasm, and intelligence that might be applied to running the nation is dissipated somewhere in the wide world of sports. In many towns the chamber of commerce will tell you that the local professional sports franchises boost pride of place and civic spirit. The mayor, the local newspaper editors, and the sports-wimps on TV say the same, although it is obvious that a democracy that can't get ten thousand people together for a routine political rally but gets ten times that number out to welcome back the hockey team has problems. So a strike by professional athletes is a major event. If the boys ever stopped throwing balls through the air and the cheerleaders ever cut out the hootchie-cootchie stuff, people might begin to look around and ask some questions.

Some athletic strikes are more serious than others. Last year's baseball strike did not evoke as much sustained anger and indignation as has the withholding of services by fifteen hundred professional football players. The dogmatists who run the *Conservative Digest* put this strike—not of railroad workers or missile technicians or farmers but of football players—on the cover of their magazine, scaring their already permanently terrified readers with the news that "socialism, responsible for economic stagnation in Britain, the flight of business from France, alcoholism in Sweden and food shortages throughout the third world, now threatens America's national pastime, pro football. The doctrines of Marx, Keynes, and Galbraith, previously confined to college classrooms and governments, has arrived on the fifty-yard line. . . . " Football is just a game? Don't you believe it.

Football is the special province of the complacent crazies who populate the upper-middle class. Baseball, by contrast, remains a game of the humbler blue- and white-collar masses. The price of a baseball ticket is low enough so that whole families can go to a game. It is an entertainment that secretaries, stock boys, nurses, factory workers, and journalists can afford. Football is expensive; in the cities where it is played, companies buy up great blocks of tax-deductible seats for their officers and customers. You don't walk up to a box office and buy a ticket to a National Football League game. The patronage is by season ticket at $200-plus a shot. Even then, you have to know someone.

Football, pro football most of all, has been made a metaphor for right thinking and right feeling in the U.S. of A. The Dallas Cowboys are America's team, are they not? Hairbag fundamentalist ministers do their Vicar of Bray number by associating themselves with Christian athletes, God bless 'em. Puffy-cheeked Christian politicians prefer to make their pitches for tobacco subsidies and breeder reactors with a 285-pound defensive tackle nearby. Macho businessmen point to football players as regular American heroes who combine in their chesty persons the antitheses of teamwork and individual competition in perfect free-market harmony.

FOOTBALL is also a paradigm of significant chunks of American business life in a way that isn't boasted of. Behind the rah-rah about competition, the private sector, making it on your own, son, and the rest of the litany of cant, professional football is a heavily subsidized business run as an unsentimental monopoly. The greatest piece of capital investment for a football team is the stadium it plays in. Twenty-four of the twenty-six stadiums used by the National Football League were erected at taxpayers' expense. Beyond this direct subsidy, the owners of professional football teams enjoy important tax advantages not available to the rest of us, unless your accountant is depreciating your children or has worked out a way to write off an aging parent. And on top of that, the owners have perfected a system that ensures that they are not in competition with each other for gate receipts, TV revenues, or the services of the best football players. (The single exception was the decamping of the Los Angeles, née the Oakland, Raiders. Under the market-rigging agreements that characterize the league, the Oakland front office was not allowed to move its business out of its assigned territory. It was able to invade the richer Southern California market only after it sued under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and won.)

Payments for the rights to show the games on television are divvied up among the teams by a formula unrelated to performance on the field. Win or lose, each team in what is really a twenty-six-member

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partnership gets the same money. This being the case, why get involved in a bidding contest for the better players? Not long ago, *The New York Times* described what happened to one player who tried to get a job on another team: "When Vince Ferragamo, a highly regarded quarterback, played out his option with the Los Angeles Rams after the 1980 season, no National Football League team bid for his services."

Under the League's rules, a team that hires a player from another team must pay compensation to the former employer. It is as though Citibank had to pay Chase Manhattan for hiring away a vice president. In football the sum is determined by a league employee, pompously and misleadingly designated "the Commissioner." The Commissioner is huckstered as a sort of athletic Warren Burger, a fair, fatherly judge who never puts the interests of those who pay him above the commonweal.

DRAWING BY ROBERT SOULÉ FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In the face of all this red, white, and blue market-rigging, the players have banded together to commit social treason. They have bitten the hand that doesn't feed them particularly well (compared to the goodies hogged by the owners) by forming a union. A union in Macholand! A union in defiance of the most union-hating of any sports clientele! How can that clean-cut young tackle, that nice kid from Indiana who stood up there last winter at the Golden Balls Sports Banquet to represent Athletes for Christ, join a union, much less go out on strike? Shouldn't a boy like that, who took all the required courses in free enterprise, know that there are only two kinds of labor organizations, Mafia and Commie?

The AFL-CIO, not an organization to grab an opportunity if it can find a way to snooze through the main chance, has bestirred itself a bit on this one. It is publicly backing these striking Spartacuses, but it is not exploiting their cause the way it should.

In the public mind, football players, despite the violence of their work, are middle-class, white-collar types. They are what used to be called "college men." So this strike offers the AFL-CIO a grand shot at educating the white-collar millions, the office workers and such, that the idea that unions are only for proles is as old fashioned as full employment. If these skilled employees, most of whom have been in training for their work since junior high school, have discovered that they have no individual bargaining leverage, then what chance is there for the word processor operator? Well-scrubbed but tough, patriotic and competitive, giving their personal best every Sunday—these people need a union? Indeed they do—and what better illustration can there be that, regardless of how prestigious the work or how uniquely skilled the worker, you can't make it alone on the labor market?

Instead of a few lethargic gestures, organized labor should be trotting these young men around the modern American workplace, which is to say the high-rise office buildings, and using them as a way to reach people who have been taught to hate unionism in principle. Labor should also make it clear that if the football team owners get into running a scab sports business, they will be picketed and nobody will cross the lines—not the vendors, not the Astro Turf shampooers, not the television technicians.

Seldom has business been better organized or more powerful than now; seldom has labor been less so. That will not change as long as unions concentrate their efforts on industries that are on their way out the back door to Taiwan or South Korea. Those boys from Winsocki U. should be teaching the guidance counselors and the microchip shufflers and the bookkeepers that to get a raise you don't need a better resume or a mouthwash or a more pleasing physical appearance—you need a union.

NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN

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Overcoming apartheid in the resistance to apartheid.

BLACKS AND WHITES TOGETHER

BY JAMES NORTH

Johannesburg

THE POSTER READ simply, "NEIL AGGETT," followed by, "Lived for his country. Died in detention." It also displayed the photograph of a young, bearded white man, with the hint of a smile and a slight twinkle in his eyes. A huge, mostly black crowd brandished thousands of the posters as they marched angrily through the streets of Johannesburg, following Neil Aggett's coffin to West Park Cemetery.

Aggett, a 28-year-old medical doctor and trade union organizer, died in a police cell here in the early hours last February 5. He was the fifty-second person to die mysteriously while detained indefinitely under the regime's security laws. He was the first white to die. Some 15,000 people from all over South Africa braved the threat of police violence to march behind his coffin, chanting, "He was not a terrorist, He was a hero." Two days earlier, close to 100,000 workers, almost all of them black, had put down their tools for one-half hour in his memory.

To an outside world accustomed to interpreting the conflict in South Africa purely as an issue of black versus white, Dr. Aggett's funeral must have seemed a puzzling spectacle. But radical opposition to racial domination from within the white community has a long and honorable history. In the nineteenth century, a few brave individuals, such as the novelist Olive Schreiner, spoke out for racial equality. The Communist Party, multiracial from its founding in 1921, was the first of a growing number of organizations in which radical whites were active. Two extraordinary Afrikaner garment workers named Bettie Du Toit and Joanna Cornelius defied police violence and social ostracism to organize mixed trade unions from the 1930s on.

White radicals were not deterred by the repressive legislation the National Party promulgated after it came to power in 1948. Bram Fischer, who resembled Lionel Burger in Nadine Gordimer's novel, *Burger's Daughter*, was the most famous. Fischer was the heir of a prominent Afrikaner family, a distinguished lawyer, and a secret leader of the underground Communist Party for two decades. He was finally caught, tried, and sentenced to life in prison in 1966, at the age of 58. He died nine years later.

The white radicals increasingly represented a problem for some members of the leading black political movement, the African National Congress. The ANC, founded in 1912, had never admitted whites as members, but during the 1950s, a decade of widespread protest, it worked closely with the Congress of Democrats, a white organization. The two movements, along with the Natal Indian Congress and the Colored People's Congress (representing Africans of mixed descent) met in 1955 and drew up the famous Freedom Charter, the program for South Africa's future which today is experiencing a resurgence of popularity in the country. The first line of the charter states: "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white."

A minority within the African National Congress heatedly disputed that first sentence, and broke away in 1959 to found the Pan-Africanist Congress. (The new group gave other reasons for leaving. It also said the ANC was not militant enough, and it promptly declared the campaign against the hated pass laws that culminated in the Sharpeville Massacre the following year.) The PAC argued that "Azania," as it provisionally renamed the country, "belonged" to "Africans," who had to "go it alone" in the liberation struggle. Robert Sobukwe, the brilliant PAC leader who died in 1978, once defined an "African" as anyone "who owes his loyalty to Africa, who is prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority." The PAC eventually accepted a few whites as members. On balance, though, the newer movement, particularly at grassroots levels, came ambiguously close to demanding an Azania for blacks only.

In the nationwide crackdown after Sharpeville, the regime outlawed and crushed both organizations. The uneasy political lull only ended with the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement in the late 1960s. Steve Biko and the other young BCM leaders duly paid obeisance to both older organizations, which then clung to life in exile, but they had inherited more of the PAC emphasis on black exclusivity and self-reliance. They did, however, enlarge the definition of

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James North is the pseudonym of an American who has been reporting from southern Africa for several years. He is writing a book about the region to be published by Times Books next year.

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"black" to include "colored" and Indian South Africans.

The first BCM institution, the blacks-only South African Students Organization, was set up in 1968 after Biko led a walkout from the multiracial National Union of South African Students. NUSAS, based mainly at the five white, English-speaking universities, had historically been a radical force, and the mass exodus of students from the four black campuses came as something of a shock. Biko explained that the black students had come to question the sincerity of some of the whites, to resent what he called their patronizing attitudes. On a more general level, he argued that racism had taken a psychological toll among blacks: they needed to create their own autonomous organizations to restore their self-confidence. As he once put it: "The people forming the integrated complex have been extracted from various segregated societies with their inbred complexes of superiority and inferiority and these continue to manifest themselves even in the 'nonracial' set-up of the integrated complex. As a result, the integration so achieved is a one-way course, with the whites doing all the talking and the blacks listening." Biko encouraged whites to fight racism within their own communities rather than trying to work with blacks.

NUSAS, suddenly all white, was stung by the Black Consciousness criticism. The white students turned inward, passing through a painful period of self-analysis. They accepted much of Biko's indictment, and even added another charge, of "Euro-centrism," lacking knowledge of their own country. As one campus newspaper said, "His [the white student's] very culture and outlook is a hybrid of American commodity culture and a Western European intellectual heritage. So it's not unusual that he can be highly articulate on New York's urban violence, England's trade unions, and Israel's borders, while he's reduced to a stutter when asked about migrant labor, security legislation, or homeland underdevelopment." The article denied emigration was the answer. "You are part of Africa," it told students. "Your challenge lies here, and you must be prepared to stay and face it."

Specifically, NUSAS encouraged students to prepare themselves for "an African future," to acquire skills they could then put at the service of the majority of South Africans. The appeal is having a significant effect. The radical white community is larger than ever before, and still growing. It includes young lawyers, journalists, teachers, academics, trade union advisers, agricultural experts, and others. Even the growing trickle of draft resisters, who flee rather than fight for apartheid in Namibia and Angola, are tending to remain in the southern African region, working in neighboring independent countries.

Dr. Neil Aggett belonged to the radical white community. He treated patients in the emergency room of a Soweto hospital several nights a week to support himself, and did trade union work the rest of the time for no pay. "When did he sleep?" asked an incredulous black unionist on the dais next to his grave. "He was too busy helping people to sleep." Aggett, like many other radical whites, had also absorbed Steve Biko's cautions against paternalism; black and white friends alike remember him as a quiet, humble man.

Such a group of people could not go unchallenged by the apartheid regime. Since last year, about two dozen whites have been detained without trial, including Hannchen Koornhof, the niece of a Nationalist Cabinet minister, and Esther Levitan, a 55-year-old activist who works as secretary of the South African Zionist Federation. Some have been released; others are scheduled for political trials.

THE RADICALS disdainfully dismiss the parliamentary Progressive Federal Party, and cannot understand how it enjoys a vaunted reputation overseas. The PFP does *not* support majority rule; it instead advocates a hazy kind of "power-sharing." Its best-known M.P., Mrs. Helen Suzman, is on its extreme left, and is the only party figure respected by blacks.

There once was a genuinely Liberal Party here, a principled organization that included the tireless novelist Alan Paton in its leadership. It stood squarely for one man, one vote, and had a small but dedicated multiracial membership. But true liberalism is a revolutionary doctrine in South Africa, and in 1968 the regime passed legislation designed to crush the party. The grotesquely misnamed Improper Interference Act outlawed racially mixed political groupings. The Liberal Party disbanded rather than compromise.

As the white radical community increases in significance, black organizations continue to move away from exclusivity. The militant South African Allied Workers' Union, for instance, which with an estimated 75,000 members is one of the largest radical labor federations in the country, has no white members: whites are simply not found working on the docks, assembling motor vehicles, or in other SAAWU organizing constituencies. But the federation boldly declares it is theoretically open to everyone. Black and white students have started to coordinate their protest efforts closely. Even the remaining explicitly Black Consciousness organizations have discussed whether to admit whites. The view is gathering force that the 1976 Soweto uprising and the steady drumbeat since then of strikes, guerrilla raids, and the like have forever destroyed the idea of black impotence. With black pride and self-confidence restored, the need for black exclusivity is falling away.

Meanwhile, the ANC has also admitted whites as members in its exile wing, despite certain risks. Its old rival, the Pan Africanist Congress, has largely fallen apart as an organization, but there is still residual support for "going it alone" from some former PAC and

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Black Consciousness members. Some of the young people who flee the country and contemplate joining the ANC's guerrilla army question the membership of whites, or object to the organization's insistence that whites have every right to remain in South Africa after liberation. "We just make a principled stand," said one senior ANC commander based outside the country who escaped after a three-year prison sentence. "We tell them white people have been in South Africa for over three hundred years, and you cannot try to say that they no more belong there. Where do they belong? You can't try to push them to Holland. They didn't only come from Holland, they came from all over those European countries. As an organization, we are against racism, and if we engage in that type of politics, it will be racism in reverse. And remember, those white people are human beings, who are only following a wrong philosophical line."

The ANC has already started to carry out what is in effect a nonracial military program. In 1980 Oliver Tambo, its president-in-exile, signed the Geneva conventions, in which he promised that ANC guerrillas would limit their attacks to military and industrial targets and treat any captured South African soldiers as prisoners of war. The vast majority of ANC raids so far have followed these rules, hitting oil refineries, police stations, railroad lines, military bases, and other legitimate targets. (The movement's pledge is in dramatic contrast to the apartheid regime, which over the years has executed ANC members and others for politically motivated offenses, and which now holds six guerrillas on death row.) The ANC's pledge places enormous pressure on its fighters. The young guerrillas, who know they may be hanged if they are captured, will be under a continual temptation to skirt military objectives in favor of unguarded white civilian targets—isolated farms, shopping centers, all-white restaurants.

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One factor restraining them will surely be their knowledge that in addition to Dr. Neil Aggett, a number of whites have suffered enormously for participating in the liberation struggle. Besides Bram Fischer, several dozen have done long stretches in prison. Life as a white "political" is described in Hugh Lewin's understated but powerful *Bandiet: Seven Years in a South African Prison* (Penguin, 1974; reissued Heinemann, 1982), a book that deserves a wider audience. At this moment, Pretoria Local Prison holds, among others: Dave Kitson, who will be released in 1984 after serving twenty years for sabotage; Raymond Suttner, who held the courtroom spellbound defending the ANC before he was led off to start his seven-and-one-half year sentence; Renfrew Christie, who got ten years for sending the ANC information on the regime's nuclear program. The longest serving white man, engineer Denis Goldberg, was sentenced to life in 1964 for his part in the ANC's first sabotage campaign. He was 31 years old when he went inside; he is now nearing 50. There is no parole in political cases.

THE WHITE political prisoners, as Lewin's book explains, come from a variety of backgrounds; they carry on vigorous discussions as they sit around sewing damaged mailbags, which is the required labor at the prison. But they share at least one unifying motive, which Bram Fischer voiced in court before hearing he was sentenced to life. "All the conduct with which I have been charged has been directed toward maintaining contact and understanding between the races of this country. If one day it may help to establish a bridge across which white leaders and the real leaders of the nonwhites can meet to settle the destinies of all of us by negotiation and not by force of arms, I shall be able to bear with fortitude any sentence which this Court may impose on me."

The bridge-building aspect of Fischer's sacrifice seems to be failing, at least with regard to the majority of whites. The radicals, despite their growth in the last few years, are probably not going to win over much of the white population. As the guerrilla attacks occur more frequently, many of the whites are edging even further to the right. But what is significant, and moving, about the white radicals is that they exist at all, that from within a smugly affluent, parochial, conformist society there could emerge several thousand people who renounce their privilege to make common cause with their fellow countrymen, who share the risks, and, like Neil Aggett, pay the penalties. And what is equally if not more astonishing is that the black people who are in the forefront of the national liberation movement should espouse such an intensely moral approach to the South African situation, that they should refuse to respond to racism in kind, and that they should as a consequence be prepared to suffer to uphold principles which the Western world sometimes claims as its own unique heritage.

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Fixated on Russia, we risk losing to Japan.

HI-TECH WARFARE

BY ROBERT B. REICH

THE UNITED STATES is engaged in two global contests. The first is a political contest with the Soviet Union. The second is an economic contest with Japan. The first began shortly after World War II; it requires complex weapons systems and rests on a delicate set of alliances and spheres of influence. The second began about a dozen years ago; it requires complex technologies and depends on an intricate set of trading relationships. Both contests are critical to the future of America—the second quite as much as the first. But the present Administration seems incapable of viewing international relations in any terms other than cold war diplomacy.

The fiasco over the Soviet gas pipeline is only the most recent example. Last October, after six years of negotiation, the Western European nations agreed to supply the Soviets with equipment to build a pipeline that would carry natural gas 3,600 miles from the Siberian fields to Western Europe. The equipment was to include compressors, which would work like giant fans to push the gas along the pipeline, and some 125 turbines, which would supply the power to operate the compressors. The most intricate part of a turbine is the rotor—a collection of carefully shaped blades, arranged along a shaft. Their manufacture requires sophisticated casting techniques and exotic metals. The rotors were to be designed and supplied by America's General Electric Company; equipment for the compressors was to come from other American companies such as Dresser, Caterpillar, and Cooper Industries. But last December 11, citing the Soviet Union's "heavy and direct responsibility for the repression in Poland," the Reagan Administration abruptly barred American exports of any high technologies to the Soviets, forcing the cancellation of these subcontracts, which were worth some $250 million.

The December 11 ban did not have much impact on the timetable for the pipeline, however, since several European companies, which hold licenses from the U.S. firms to manufacture American-designed equipment on their own, stepped in to fill the gap. Even this inconvenience appeared to be short-lived when, at the Versailles economic summit in early June, then-Secretary of State Alexander Haig suggested to Western European leaders that the President would ease the pipeline restrictions if the Europeans would limit their practice of extending favorable credit terms to the Soviets. The Europeans accepted the bargain, agreeing to raise their interest rates on Soviet loans. But then the other shoe dropped: on June 18, President Reagan, apparently irked at statements by some Europeans that the limits on export credits were meaningless, extended the original pipeline ban to cover sale to the Soviets by foreign subsidiaries of American companies (technically, any firm in which an American company has a controlling interest, even if that means ownership of a comparatively small percentage of the foreign company's outstanding shares) and also to include sales by foreign firms of American-licensed technology. The reason given for this sweeping ban was that the Soviets had simply failed to respond to the earlier sanctions.

European reaction was swift. The French and Italian governments promptly instructed their companies to defy the American ban and fulfill the Soviet contracts. West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt urged German companies also to flout the U.S sanctions, and there is no indication that the new Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, disagrees. Even Margaret Thatcher, Reagan's ideological soulmate, invoked Britain's 1980 law on trade, which limits the extraterritoriality of United States laws. On August 25, the French subsidiary of Dallas-based Dresser industries began loading three large compressors onto a cargo ship bound for the Soviet Union. Other European companies have followed suit.

The pipeline simply means too much to the Europeans to bow to American pressure. It promises jobs for several thousand European workers (a weighty consideration with over ten million Europeans now unemployed), orders worth at least $11 billion, and a source of energy from somewhere other than the Persian Gulf. Frustrated by Europe's intransigence, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger recently cited widespread reports of the Soviet Union's use of "slave labor" on the construction of the pipeline as another compelling reason for the ban. The French and West German governments, as well as the U.S., are reportedly investigating the matter, but there is little likelihood that the Europeans' position will change.

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And even if the pipeline ban could be enforced, it would not seriously hurt the Soviets. At most, it would postpone the building of the pipeline for one or two years while European companies redesigned the turbines and the Soviets produced substitute rotors. In the meantime, the Soviets would collect sizable penalties and performance bonds from the European companies in default. Ironically, the only internationally traded item that the Soviets really need, and on which a widely observed trade embargo might therefore have a noticeable effect on Soviet policy, has nothing to do with the pipeline. It is grain. For every $160 million in grain the Soviets buy abroad, they save enough resources to produce $700 million worth of oil. And yet, anxious to placate hard-hit Midwestern farmers, the Reagan Administration—at the height of the pipeline controversy—extended for another year the U.S. agreement to sell the Soviet Union up to 23 million tons of wheat and corn. In light of the grain agreement, Reagan's insistence that the nations of Western Europe must bear the cost of whipping the Soviets into line seems churlish, if not duplicitous. The Administration's main argument, that Soviet gas sales will earn the Russians hard currency while American grain sales to the Soviets will cost them currency, would be stronger if the currency earned by the Soviets on the gas sales were not going to be merely passed on to American farmers in exchange for grain.

EVEN LESS CONVINCING is the Administration's concern that the pipeline will make the Europeans overly dependent on the Soviets and therefore render them more vulnerable to Russian power politics. By the most optimistic forecast, Russian gas exports to Western Europe will account for less than one-fourth of Europe's gas consumption by 1990—with much of the rest still coming from the Middle East. And that fraction of Europe's gas needs will amount to a much smaller fraction—no more than 8 percent—of Western Europe's total energy bill. From the standpoint of Europe's vulnerability, it seems wiser to diversify energy supplies than to continue to gamble on a steady supply from the Middle East. More to the point, with its missiles poised at Europe's major cities and its tanks amassed along Europe's borders, the Soviet Union has more effective means for twisting Europe's collective arm than sacrificing revenues on its sales of natural gas. The leaders of Western Europe may not wear Adam Smith ties, but they do understand that because trade generates benefits for both traders, it inevitably creates *mutual* dependencies, and this mutuality deters either side from doing anything that may displease the other. The Europeans see the pipeline as a bulwark *against* Soviet power politics in the region.

Europe's open and noisy defiance of the pipeline ban is a blow to American credibility and a setback for the Atlantic alliance as a whole. But there is no serious danger that this break signals the beginning of a gradual dissolution of NATO. Europe and America simply have too much at stake in their mutual security to let a pipeline come between them. The real damage of this imbroglio will be to the American economy, and the real beneficiaries will be the Japanese. To understand why this is so, it is necessary to look at the new global environment in which Japanese and American companies are now competing.

High-technology components are the fastest growing and most competitive segments of international trade. They are coming to be the building blocks for countless manufactured products. Precision gadgetry like semiconductors, micro-processors, lasers, fiber-optic cables, robots, turbines, and rotors are finding their way into all sorts of complex machines, from automobiles to guided missiles. Because semiconductors can store huge amounts of information on the miniature circuits that are etched onto them, for example, they are key elements in new computer, telecommunication, and aerospace technology. Total world sales for these wafer-thin, fingernail-sized components have more than quadrupled since 1970. From $10.5 billion last year, they will reach $80 billion by 1990. Dominance in technological building blocks like these will provide the same economic strength that steel production gave the United States in the first half of this century. The nation that can produce them cheaper and better than any other will have a huge advantage in producing and selling the advanced technologies of the future.

Success in selling such components as miniature circuits and fiber-optic cable depends on volume, experience, and technological innovation. Since much of the technology can be reproduced quite simply, the cost of making it declines rapidly with the volume of production—a 15 to 25 percent drop every time the volume doubles. With experience in reducing the cost of material and overhead, and in fabrication, the cost can drop still further, while quantity improves. Even the production of precision products like rotors benefits substantially from know-how and experience.

THE RACE COURSE is worldwide. Japanese and American companies are competing to obtain volume and experience by selling around the globe to manufacturers that use the technologies in their final products. These Japanese or American companies sometimes can gain more ground by licensing a foreign company to manufacture the equipment on its own, on the basis of Japanese or American designs; this is typically done when there are substantial costs to transporting the equipment, or where a foreign country—anxious to preserve employment and gain technological know-how—has erected import barriers. The American or Japanese company that licenses the technology earns royalty fees that help it pay for further research and development, and also gains potential customers for additional technology that com-

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plements the licensees' equipment. In this way, licensing often provides a foot in the door to obtaining experience and volume in a whole range of related components.

Viewed in this light, the pipeline ban appears more ominous. The real losers are American companies that supply or license European manufacturers with high-technology components. In the future, these European manufacturers will think twice before contracting with an American company. Who knows when another ban—tenuously related to American defense interests—will be invoked by the White House? Whenever possible, these European manufacturers will look to Japan for their high-technology needs. They have learned their lesson, and American companies—not just General Electric, Dresser, Caterpillar, and Cooper, but the whole array of American high-technology manufacturers—will surely suffer for it.

THE SAME SORT of economic myopia can be seen in the Reagan Administration's policies toward Latin America. At last October's Cancun conference in Mexico, the Administration piously decried the use of foreign aid and export credits to bolster the economies of our southern neighbors, preferring to rely instead, as President Reagan phrased it, on "the magic of the market-place." It was to be through trade, not aid, that Latin Americans would come to embrace the wonders of capitalism. In retrospect it is clear that this talk was aimed more at shoring up America's political and military influence south of the border than at bolstering the region's economies. While arms sales to Latin America have increased 30 percent over the past ten months, the door to the promised U.S. market has been slammed shut. Last May, Reagan signed a proclamation imposing quotas on sugar imports for the first time since 1974. As a result, Latin American and Caribbean exporters stand to lose some $180 million annually—to say nothing of the extra $3 billion that American consumers will now be paying each year. The beneficiaries are 14,000 American sugar producers and processors—notably Gulf and Western Industries, the Hunt brothers' Great Western Sugar Company, and the Monitor Sugar Company, owned by Barlow Rand Ltd. of South Africa.

Other Latin American industries are also being denied access to the American market. In what is ultimately a futile effort at protecting American textile manufacturers from foreign competition, the United States will soon sign bilateral deals with Mexico and Brazil designed to limit their textile exports to America to the same low levels as were permitted under the old Multifiber Agreement. And Brazilian steelmakers are coming under fire. On June 10 the Department of Commerce preliminarily ruled that Brazil—which has the largest and most accessible iron ore reserves outside the Soviet Union and has among the most modern steelmaking plants in the world—was unfairly subsidizing its steel industry and that Brazilian steelmakers must therefore pay extensive duties. Small wonder that Latin America, in turn, has relatively little interest in paying high prices for American commercial high technologies.

Meanwhile the Japanese are busy building markets in Latin America for their high technologies. The Japanese understand that the demand for many products that incorporate high technologies is growing faster there than in industrialized countries. For example, sales of automobiles, television sets, and home appliances are sluggish in the United States and Western Europe, both because of the recession and because most Americans and Europeans already own these products. But in Latin America sales of the same products have mushroomed in recent years, and once the current world recession is over, we can expect further growth. By selling in these expanding markets, building manufacturing facilities there, licensing Latin American producers to manufacture Japanese-designed components, and providing Latin Americans with entire plants of their own, the Japanese are participating directly in that growth. Japanese companies thereby gain the sales volume they need to set a very low price for their high technologies, enabling them to undercut American competitors even in the U.S. market. At the same time, the Japanese are setting up channels to market their older technologies.

IN THIS WAY, Latin America is being incorporated into the strategies by which Japanese companies plan to grow. Meanwhile, Latin Americans are gaining the resources and skills necessary to make use of the new technologies. All this is made possible by the continual forward movement of Japanese industry. Collaborating with the government, Japanese companies are willing to discard older technologies as fast as newer ones can be developed, while financing the development of the new technologies by gaining strong and sometimes dominant positions in the world market for older ones. Japan's Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund provides very low-interest loans to Latin Americans to finance large technological purchases, particularly of whole manufacturing plants (60 percent of Japan's Ex-Im Bank loans are aimed at selling whole plants). Japan's tax laws provide additional incentives for technological transfer. And Japan provides its companies with generous insurance against foreign losses. American foreign policy, obsessed with military and diplomatic advantage, is blind to this dynamic competitive process.

The same failure to understand international competition is affecting the very development of American high technology. The Pentagon now funds about 30 percent of all the research and development undertaken in the United States—almost twice the proportion as funded by the Japanese government. For basic research, concerned with broad-based and theoretical

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experimentation that may have few immediate commercial applications, government funding exceeds two-thirds of the total.

Right now the Pentagon is funding research and contracting for very large-scale integrated circuits (the next major stage in the evolution of semiconductors), computer-aided manufacturing technologies appropriate to a "factory of the future," advanced fiber optics, lasers, and a "fifth generation" computer. Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry is pushing the same technologies. But unlike MITI, the Defense Department has no interest in the successful marketing of these new technologies. The Pentagon wants new and ever more advanced weapons systems. The two goals have begun to diverge sharply.

The marketing of new commercial products is stimulated by domestic competition, which forces firms to improve their performance and aggressively seek foreign outlets. Although MITI allows firms to cooperate on specific basic research projects, it ensures that they are fiercely competitive in marketing. For example, thirty-two Japanese companies now produce semiconductors, and the competition is intense. But the Pentagon is unconcerned about competition within American industry. Over 65 percent of the dollar volume of U.S. defense contracts is now awarded without competitive bidding. And even where competitive bidding occurs, the bids are often rendered meaningless by large cost overruns. The Pentagon seems most comfortable with large, stable contractors who are relatively immune to the uncertainties of competition.

MARKETING NEW PRODUCTS successfully also requires long lead times, during which firms can apply new technologies and make sure they have adequate capital, labor, and productive capacity to meet anticipated demand. Many MITI projects span a decade or more. But Pentagon programs are subject to relatively sudden changes in politics and in perceptions of national security needs. The precipitous rise in U.S. defense spending planned for the next five years is likely to create bottlenecks in the production of key subcomponents and capital goods, and shortages of engineers and scientists in advanced electronics and machinery. Even in the midst of a recession, unfulfilled defense orders totaled $63 billion in 1981—up 30 percent from 1980. And there is already a shortage of an estimated 60,000 skilled machinists.

Finally, and most important of all, commercialization requires that new technologies be transferable to commercial uses at relatively low cost. MITI sees to it that new technologies are diffused rapidly into the economy, and incorporated into countless commercial products. But the advanced designs required by tomorrow's elaborate military hardware—designs incorporated into precision-guided munitions, air-to-air missiles, cruise missiles, night-vision equipment, and missile-tracking devices—will not be as easily applicable to commercial uses as were the more primitive technologies produced during the defense and aerospace programs of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Indeed, it is precisely because America's commercial high technologies are not likely to be adaptable to defense needs in the years ahead that the Defense Department has launched its own research and development programs to produce advanced gadgets designed expressly to meet its own needs. Rather than encourage American commercial development, defense spending on emerging high technologies will have the opposite effect over the long term, diverting U.S. scientists and engineers away from commercial applications. And Pentagon jitters about leaks to the Soviets are casting a veil of secrecy over commercial hi-tech research (at one recent photo-optics engineering meeting, 170 unclassified papers had to be withdrawn). The big losers: American entrepreneurs scouting for new inventions.

This disjuncture between defense needs and the development of commercial high technology is likely to loom larger in the next few years, as the defense build-up proceeds apace. Planned military spending will exceed $1.5 trillion over the next six years. This will profoundly affect several emerging industries. Between now and 1987, for example, defense spending for semiconductors is expected to increase by 18.3 percent, while commercial semiconductor purchases will increase by only 11.8 percent. A similarly divergent growth pattern is expected for computer sales (16.4 percent for defense, 11.8 percent for commercial purposes), engineering and scientific equipment sales (9 percent for defense, 5.6 percent for commercial purposes), and sales of communications technologies (11.6 percent for defense, 5.3 percent for commercial purposes). There are already signs that the Defense Department is taking over the space shuttle program, thereby cutting off the shuttle's fledgling commercial applications. At the same time, the department's share of government research and development outlays is expected to rise to over 60 percent by 1983.

THE ONLY CONCERTED EFFORT by Washington to meet the Japanese threat in commercial high technology is through veiled attempts at sealing off the American market from the Japanese. Several months ago, for example, the Defense Department and the Federal Communications Commission both urged AT&T not to award a large fiber-optics contract to Fujitsu, even though the Japanese company had offered the lowest bid. Obediently (and with respectful awareness of the fact that AT&T's fate now rests with several government officials engaged in redesigning communications policy), AT&T has now announced that the lucrative contract, and all future fiber-optic contracts, would be awarded only to American firms. And in recent weeks U.S. prosecutors have launched a spate of legal attacks on Japanese manufacturers: employees of Hitachi and Mitsubishi have been indicted

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for allegedly seeking to steal computer secrets from IBM; Mitsui, the large trading company, has been charged with selling Japanese steel to Americans at unfairly low prices (Mitsui pleaded guilty to the charge); and the Justice Department is investigating six Japanese semiconductor manufacturers for alleged price fixing. Regardless of the underlying truth of these charges (it would not be surprising if Japanese companies, which exist in a far less litigious culture than ours, fail to observe the niceties of American law), there is little doubt that the purpose and effect of these lawsuits is to deter the Japanese from aggressively marketing their products in the United States.

IN ALL THESE WAYS—and in countless others—the United States is sacrificing the nation's economic future to the short-term exigencies of national defense and the parochial demands of domestic producers. America continues to regard the rest of the world through the foggy lenses of cold war diplomacy rather than through the clear glasses of commercial competition. Our international economic policies consist almost entirely of trade embargoes, tariffs, quotas, dumping complaints, antitrust challenges, and an occasional sensational arrest for alleged theft of trade secrets. All this, coupled with a draconian monetary policy that keeps interest rates at record levels, forces the dollar up in international trade, making American goods even less attractive in the global market and cutting short economic recovery in every other industrialized nation. Meanwhile, rather than encouraging our emerging industries and nurturing our high technologies, we are distorting their growth through exhorbitant defense expenditures on esoteric military hardware.

It is ironic that the Reagan Administration, whose laissez-faire rhetoric comes to us almost intact from the nineteenth century, should stymie free and robust international trade and cripple American industry in the process. But the conservative mind still sees the world as a vast chessboard on which subtle games of power politics are to be played—another vestige of the nineteenth century. The international economy is of secondary importance. Foreign policy is the bailiwick of the State and Defense Departments; the Commerce Department plays third fiddle. We have no equivalent of Japan's MITI, which is concerned primarily with the future of the national economy and its place in a changing world economy.

This international myopia is having grave consequences. America is in danger of losing the high-technology race. The nation's economy is not evolving rapidly enough for American companies to capture a significant share of the world's emerging markets. Already the Japanese have 60 percent of the world market in 64k memory chips. They are gaining significant market shares in fiber optics, communications equipment, sensing devices, and composite materials. They are substantially ahead in robotics, computer-aided manufacturing, and photo voltaics. America's declining competitiveness in these emerging technologies will be accompanied by a decline in our standard of living. Indeed, the decline has already begun.

Some will say that all this is well and good. Americans have lived too high on the hog for too long, and it is fitting and right that other industrialized nations should reach and surpass us. Who cares about high technology anyway? The problem is twofold. First and most obviously, if our national economy is no longer growing and many Americans therefore come to feel poor relative to what they once had and relative to what citizens in some other countries now have, it will be harder than ever to convince them to share their wealth with their less fortunate fellow citizens. All too often, history teaches us, a society's capacity for compassion and civic virtue exists in direct proportion to the rise in its citizens' real incomes.

THE SECOND PROBLEM with a declining position in international competition brings us full circle, back to national defense. For our ability to maintain peace and deter aggression depends on our overall prosperity; the resources and commitments that national defense requires over the long term can be sustained only amid a growing and buoyant economy. Perhaps even more to the point, America's best guarantee of national security over the long term is a buoyant world economy in which the fruits of prosperity are widely shared. Trade embargoes, tariffs, quotas, dumping complaints, arms sales, and all the other ways in which American foreign policy distorts international trade add nothing to the real wealth of the world. Unlike the military and diplomatic contest that preoccupies the present Administration, the contest in commercial high technology at least in some respects pays a dividend to the rest of the world in the form of a higher quality of life.

The United States can meet the Japanese challenge in high technology only through policies calculated to spur American hi-tech producers to commercial success in world markets: generous funding of commercial research and development; insurance against foreign losses; low-interest loans to lesser developed nations to finance their technological purchases; education loans and grants to ensure an adequate supply of engineers and teachers; awards of defense contracts to smaller, innovative hi-tech companies; more defense contracts channeled toward generic technologies with commercial applications; and an open world trading system that eschews embargoes and import barriers. In short, we need an affirmative industrial policy for American high technology. By taking precisely the opposite tack in each of these areas, the Reagan Administration is threatening our economic future, and, in the process, jeopardizing our national security.

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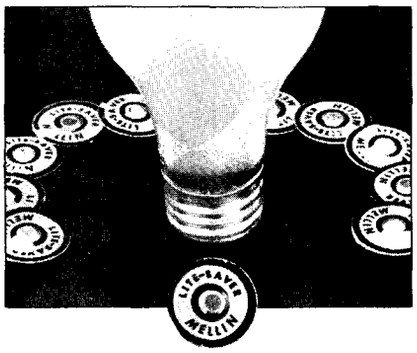
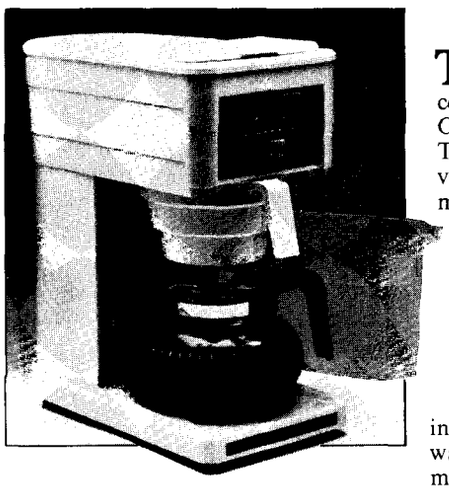
TOOLS FOR LIVING™

Lite Savers



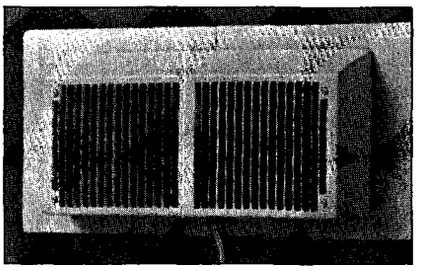
If you're tired of climbing ladders and getting into precarious (often dangerous) positions to change an out of the way light bulb then you should know about Mellin Lite-Savers. Adhered to the base of any *one way* bulb the Lite-Savers can extend bulb life from 50 to 100 times! Just think of the money saved in light bulbs! Most bulbs have a rated life of 750 hours or 32 days if used continuously. With Lite-Savers your bulbs will burn up to 75,000 hours or about eight years if used 24 hours a day. They're ideal for hallways, staircases, or anyplace where replacing light bulbs is a time consuming nuisance. You'll notice that Lite-Savers reduce light output so you may want to increase bulb wattage. They're safe, dependable and install quickly and easily with any one way bulb. The manufacturer offers a limited eight year warranty. We offer the Lite-Savers in a package of 6 for **$17.00** ($1.95) #A548 or 12 for **$27.00** ($2.95) #A549 or 24 for **$49.00** ($3.95) #A642.

Coffee Service Par Excellence



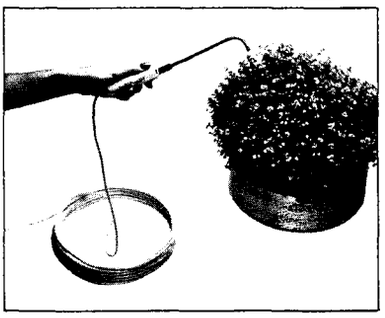
The best cup of coffee we've tasted comes from the Bunn-O-Matic Corporation. They manufacture the vast majority of commercial coffee brewers so it's no wonder that we found their home model outstanding in design, performance and economy of operation. The Bunn home model is constructed in essentially the same way as the commercial models with stainless steel and copper interiors. Cheaper brewers use plastic and aluminum, which don't wear as well and which also tend to leach unpleasant tastes into the coffee. The Bunn unit utilizes three different heaters: an 800-watt heater, which comes on for about 10 minutes whenever fresh water is added to the system; a 34-w heater, which stays on continuously and keeps the water inside the unit at 200°; and a 65-w warmer, which is switch-controlled and used to keep brewed coffee warm. The convenience and the quality of the coffee are the day-to-day pleasures of the Bunn Brewer. It is marvelous to have 8 cups of freshly brewed coffee ready in less than three minutes. As for the taste, you'll have to see for yourself—but the next time you are in a restaurant where you especially like the coffee, look to see if it wasn't brewed on a Bunn. The basic Bunn brewer, Model GR, comes in almond-colored, nonstainable plastic and costs **$69.00** ($7.95) #A370. Bunn also offers a deluxe model in all stainless steel. This Model LX,—the only one of its kind on the market—costs a respectable **$189.00** ($8.95) #A371. The manufacturer provides a full one-year warranty on both models.

Register Fan



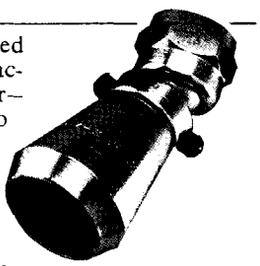
Every hot air heating system has at least one or two. Cold spots, that is—places that for some reason never quite get up to temperature. Often it is the rooms furthest from the furnace, an unusually large room, or rooms in a later addition. This booster fan (actually it is two small 4" fans running together) fits right in the register outlet, sucks heat up the duct and pushes it out into the room. A heat sensor in the switch turns the fan on automatically as the heat comes up (there is also a manual control, which means you can use it in the summer to move the cool air off the floor and up into the room). The fan fits all registers up to 6"x14" and plugs into any electrical outlet. It comes with 9' of cord. The register fans cost **$40.00** ($3.95) #A536.

Watering Whiz

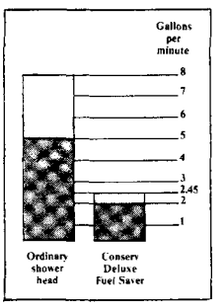


Do your houseplants run you ragged, back and forth, trip after trip, watering can in hand? There *is* an easier way: with an indoor garden hose you can water them all in a single trip. Think of the steps waiting to be saved! This 50' (that is a *lot* of reach) vinyl hose readily attaches to any household faucet. From there you just take the water where you want it—an easy-control handle allows you to turn a splashless stream of water on and off as needed. This indoor hose comes with a snap-in misting attachment, so after you water the roots you can spray the foliage and wash away the dust accumulation that impairs a plant's health as well as its beauty. The complete indoor garden hose kit costs just **$11.00** ($1.95) #A341.

Savings In The Shower



This finely crafted shower head called the Deluxe Fuel Saver and manufactured by Con-Serv, cuts the use of water—hot water—in the shower from 5 or 8 to 2.45 gallons per minute. With the conventional shower head, the average family of four uses 300 to 400 gallons of water—much of it heated—everyday. According to U.S. Department of Energy figures, with the Deluxe Fuel Saver that same family uses 70% less water in the shower and realizes a savings of between $150 and $350 depending on the utility rates. Although the amount of water is significantly reduced, it is aerated and accelerated—utilizing the Venturi principle—for an invigorating shower. The Deluxe Fuel Saver also offers a "trickle valve" that allows you to stop water flow while soaping up. Made of chrome-plated solid brass, the Deluxe Fuel Saver is accompanied by a one-year limited warranty. It installs easily over the standard ½" shower arm with pliers or a wrench—no plumber is needed. We offer the Con-Serv Deluxe Fuel Saver for **$16.00** ($2.95) #A351.



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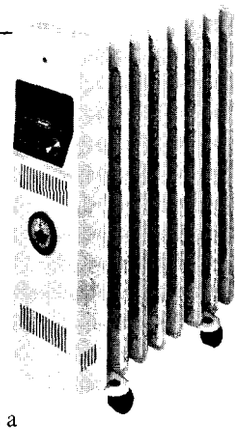
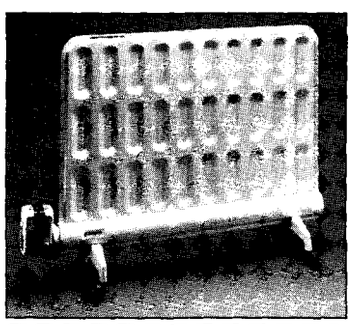


We've tried many different space heaters in search of the best combination of safety, economy and heating efficiency. The two portable oil-filled radiators presented here won our favor for many reasons, especially safety. There are no exposed flames, they do not get overly hot (making them suitable even for a child's room), and they emit no fumes or odors. They are filled with a special oil that heats up quickly, cools down slowly and never needs replacing. Both styles have easy roll wheels for room-to-room portability and a built-in thermostat that responds to changing room temperatures. When functioning as a supplement to your central heating system these European-made heaters can make your home more comfortable and much more energy efficient. The **DeLonghi** heater, shown above, has a feature not common to most space heaters—*an automatic timer. You can program it to go on and off in 15 minute intervals day or night.* For example, set it to go off a few minutes before you wake in the morning so your bathroom or bedroom has started to warm before you get up! This unit has three heat settings (600w, 900w, 1,500w) and provides a maximum of 5,100 BTUs. The DeLonghi comes in a neutral oyster color, weighs 38 lbs. and is UL listed. This model with automatic timer is *not generally available in retail stores* and costs **$150.00** ($12.95) #A485. The **Dimplex** panel radiator, (shown below) offers an unusual, yet attractive contemporary design. The large heating surface of the panel provides an ideal balance of half radiant and half convected heat—no energy is wasted. The unit draws a maximum of 750 watts and produces 2559 BTUs. It's 31½″ long x 23½″ high and comes in two colors: bronze #A563 or white #A562. The Dimplex radiators cost **$150.00** ($12.95) each.



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Ice and feet make a treacherous combination. With ice underfoot walking is no longer a mere habit but a reckless challenge to the law of gravity. Fear of falling whispers to us about the danger of our feet flying out from under us in a sudden, total and undignified loss of control. But there is a way to get a grip on the situation. These rubber harnesses slip right over shoes or boots and put four tungsten-carbide-tipped spikes between you and the ice. The new traction and control is effective psychologically as well as physically. The spikes are portable enough to fit easily in a coat pocket or bag and slip on in seconds. Order size small #A633 for shoe sizes up to 8, medium #A634 for 8½-11 and large #A635 for 11½ and over. If you plan to wear the spikes over heavy boots, order the next larger size. The slip-on spikes cost **$16.00** ($2.95) a pair.

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These best-selling products have appeared in previous *Tools for Living* sections. We think they make excellent Christmas gifts.

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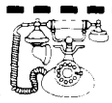

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Virtuoso, Virtue, Vegas

Norman Steinberg, who wrote *Yes, Giorgio*, is co-author (with Dennis Palumbo) of *My Favorite Year*, which opened a week later. Besides the coincidental timing, there's another coincidence: both scripts are comedy constructs for virtuosi. The plot and the gag sequences of the Pavarotti film need no discussion, which is what I gave them, but there were a few amusing lines scattered through it. In *My Favorite Year* the virtuoso is Peter O'Toole, Pavarotti's peer in his own art; for him, Steinberg and friend have built a script with a more novel plot line, better comic mix-ups, and many more amusing lines. Both films would be nonexistent without their particular stars, but with Pavarotti, Steinberg relied heavily on what Verdi and Ponchielli and Puccini would supply; here he and Palumbo had to supply the stuff for this virtuoso themselves.

My Favorite Year
(MGM/UA)

Tex
(Buena Vista)

Lookin' To Get Out
(Paramount)

The "favorite year" is 1954. The "my" belongs to a young comedy writer on a live TV show in New York. O'Toole plays a film star, distilled apparently from Errol Flynn and John Barrymore with a soupçon of O'Toole; he is to appear on that show, which is patently modeled on "Your Show of Shows" and/or the subsequent "Caesar's Hour," both of which starred Sid Caesar. The young writer is assigned to shepherd the film star, to make sure he turns up on time and sober for his TV appearance. *My Favorite Year* was produced by Mel Brooks's picture company; Brooks was a writer for Caesar in those days; so it seems fair to assume that he is the model for the narrator of the story who, like Brooks, is a Jewish boy from Brooklyn, though quite different in character from the Brooks I knew a bit at the time. The script has other characters with real forebears: they include the comedy star of the TV series, here called King Kaiser and delightfully played by Joseph Bologna, and the producer of the series, atrociously played by Adolph Green.

It's a good basic gimmick, with a culturally fertile locus; but Steinberg, with a collaborator as much as without one, has trouble with structure. An important plot strand makes Kaiser face up stoutly to a tough racketeer who wants the format of the show changed; for climax, it's necessary that Kaiser stand firm, but his courage sounds like script necessity. Steinberg doesn't understand that gags need credibility in order to be funny; the sozzled O'Toole at one point dangles from a roof, held only by a fire hose in which he got accidentally entangled, and remains quite blithe. Steinberg has a defective sense of the trite: O'Toole's scene with the boy's family in Brooklyn, complete with a blimp-sized parody of a Jewish Mother, is a wagonload of week-old knishes; and Steinberg adds schmaltz in a dinner-club scene where O'Toole thrills an old lady by dancing with her on her wedding anniversary. Steinberg attributes (impossibly) to Edmund Kean a remark that is generally believed to have been made by Edmund Gwenn. As in *Yes, Giorgio*, there's a heart-baring Moment of Truth just before the last scene. With Pavarotti, it was preparation for the heroine's tearful departure; with O'Toole it's the youth's insistence that the film star be in life what he has always been in fantasy. And that finale is a scene in which the O'Toole character swashbuckles to the aid of the comedy star in a fight with gangsters on live TV before twenty million people, so unbelievable as a premise and so stale in detail that it quickly becomes tedious.

All these fumblings, these insufficient *testings* of each idea for scene and gag, render a potentially good comedy script into one more clanking movie machine with a few good performances. But Steinberg and Palumbo have tailored some savory dialogue for O'Toole, and that magical man, besides dealing precisely with a surprising amount of physical comedy, handles his lines with Pavarottian swell.

My only complaint about him is circumferential. In a film like this, O'Toole seems to be resting on laurels, and he doesn't have enough laurels to rest on, considering the magnitude of his gifts. He's now fifty years old, and the amount of piffery in his career, even allowing for the fact that no actor can escape *some* piffery, is disproportionate for a man of something close to genius.

Mark Linn-Baker makes his film debut, pleasantly, as the young writer. I've been seeing Linn-Baker since he was a first-year acting student at Yale, and I hope he gets the chance to use gifts of his that are more than pleasant—like his talent for pantomime. Richard Benjamin, known up to now as an actor, makes his directing debut here and shows an ability to pace and weave the interplay of actors.

There's nothing seriously wrong with *Tex*. Therefore, as with most pictures

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Burden of Dreams. A generally fascinating documentary on the making of *Fitzcarraldo*. Possibly the first time that a feature and a film about it were in release together. (See *Fitzcarraldo* first.)

Céleste. A quietly exquisite German film about Marcel Proust and the housekeeper of his last years. Well made by Percy Adlon, delicately played by Jürgen Arndt and Eva Mattes.

Fitzcarraldo. Werner Herzog's wildly romantic saga about an Irish adventurer in Peru, c. 1910. Energy and passion, epitomized in Klaus Kinski's burning performance.

Yes, Giorgio. Luciano Pavarotti. Probably should be in a separate list called Films Worth Hearing.

SK

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that have nothing seriously wrong with them, it has been overpraised. It's a modest, genuine story of a 15-year-old Oklahoma boy with an older brother who takes care of him because their mother is dead and their father is off working at rodeos. The father omits to send money; older brother has to sell their two horses so that he and Tex can eat. Tex loves nothing in the world as much as his horse, Rowdy. Troubles ensue; so do solutions. Nothing in the film's movement is false, and a good deal of enjoyable horse-country atmosphere comes through. For a picture that begins with a boy kissing his horse, there is no way to go but up; and *Tex* does.

Matt Dillon, who was a juvenile heavy in *My Bodyguard*, plays Tex honestly, with continually growing appeal. His brother—like Dillon, a touch too old for his role—is Jim Metzler, who adds the needed tones. Tex gets in trouble at high school, and the principal behaves justly and humanely in the person of Frances Lee McCain. Tim Hunter, who directed at the noncomic competent level of Richard Benjamin's comic direction, adapted the screenplay with Charlie Haas from a novel by S. E. Hinton, whose first name is Susan.

The second best virtue of *Tex* is that, by power of suggestion, you can smell country air once in a while. Its best virtue is that it's a film to which you can take youngsters without being bored yourself.

YOU WOULDN'T WANT to take youngsters to *Lookin' to Get Out*. I don't know why you'd want to take yourself. Jon Voight, an exceptionally affecting actor, spends years waiting for the right script; this time he waited for the wrong one—and has compounded the fallacy by collaborating on the screenplay. It's so bad that it even dulls the usual impact of his personality.

Voight is a small-time Manhattan gambler, with a pal played by the professionally revolting Burt Young (Rocky's brother-in-law). The plot makes the pair flee the physical consequences of gambling debts. They go to Las Vegas, where mistaken identity gets them a lush suite and large credit, and where Voight runs into a former amour, Ann-Margret, who (he learns) is the mother of his six-year-old daughter.

Does anyone know a good film set in Las Vegas?

The director was Hal Ashby, who has never been worse and has only once been significantly better—with *The Last Detail*. Haskell Wexler, one of our best cinematographers, dozed through this one, beginning with the reading of the script. Voight's collaborator was Al Schwartz, and the result is so bad that I couldn't even see what it was that attracted them to the idea, what it was that they mucked up. All that's clear is that, besides the dreadful story, we spend two hours watching a fine actor, unbecomingly moustached, searching for a character to realize.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Great Ladies and Others

For a long time, European plays and classical revivals appeared on Broadway by courtesy of Katharine Cornell, Tallulah Bankhead, Katharine Hepburn, Lynn Fontaine, Helen Hayes, and other members of a stellar species devoted to major roles, but it has been ages since the Great Lady of the Stage was an important element in the American theater. Some years ago, the Actors Studio made a small effort to generate its own species with the likes of Kim Stanley, Julie Harris, Maureen Stapleton, and Geraldine Page, among others, but these actresses were either insufficiently magnetic or much too mannered to qualify as stage royalty, and (as the unfortunate Actors Studio *Three Sisters* later proved), most of them were ill-prepared for other than contemporary American plays. Today, our Great Stage Lady is customarily an overripe movie star who has been hired to help sell a Broadway musical; although no longer bankable in Hollywood, she is nevertheless given the opportunity to prove she can still be the Woman of the Year.

The Queen and The Rebels
by Ugo Betti

Talking With
by Jane Martin

It's for that reason that Colleen Dewhurst's announced decision to appear in Ugo Betti's *The Queen and the Rebels* (Plymouth Theater) seemed like an anachronism, and nothing in the production managed to counteract this sense of déjà vu. Miss Dewhurst is a powerful actress with a bourbon-cracked baritone, leonine hair, and a smile that makes the Cheshire cat look glum, but except for *Moon for the Misbegotten* and a thrilling Cleopatra many years ago who vamped George C. Scott's Antony in Central Park, she has never quite fulfilled the promise of her classical dimensions. This Circle in the Square production of Betti's regrettably dated play sets up all the right conditions for a Great Lady performance short of a brilliant entrance (Miss Dewhurst, her head wrapped in a shawl, literally skulks onto the stage, huddled among a group of displaced refugees); but although she is always a warm cordial presence, there is little in her performance to justify reviving the play.

The action of *The Queen and the Rebels* revolves around a whore who, in an existential moment of selflessness, allows herself to be mistaken for a Queen, even though this means she will be executed by a group of revolutionaries. The situation was later expropriated by Jean Genet for an infinitely more subtle work, *The Balcony*, which a considerably more healthy Circle in the Square also produced (in 1960) in New York. In Genet's philosophical brothel-play, the substitution of a whore for a Queen tells us something about the human capacity for illusion; in Betti's creaky melodrama, it says more about the theatrical capacity for heroics. Genet's Madame Irma succeeds in her imposture because the masses respond only to ornaments and glitter; Betti's Argia assumes her queenly role largely for the sake of a ringing curtain speech. Thus, *The Queen and the Rebels* is less akin to *The Balcony* than to those Spanish Civil war films of the 1940s with their melodramatic interrogations, brave sacrifices, and garrulous victories in the teeth of death.

Waris Hussein's ineffective direction

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largely reinforces Betti's clumsy stagecraft. In the interior of David Jenkins's parched plaster setting, unshaven revolutionaries in green fatigues bend their knees, glower, and menace everybody with their machine guns, while prisoners plot their escape within full earshot of their captors. Betty Miller (who appeared in the original Circle production of *The Balcony*) has tired woe-faced dignity as the real Queen, but Peter Michael Goetz seems impassive in the role of the interrogating commissar, possibly out of embarrassment over the narcissistic overacting of Scott Ryland as Argia's boyfriend, Raime, while Clarence Felder as the General seems to be impersonating Akim Tamiroff in *The General Died At Dawn*. As for Miss Dewhurst, wearing the map of Ireland all over her teeth, she makes a valiant effort to bring some charm and relaxation to a character whose joints are essentially frozen, but she bears the task on her back like a burden, and her connection with the other actors is ambiguous. Irene Worth played this role in England in 1955 (Leo McKern played her interrogator); one assumes she had little trouble commanding the stage. But since the day of the Great Lady is over, Miss Dewhurst seems puzzled over whether to be a company player or a star, and as a result, is trapped inside a vehicle, whose doors and windows are sealed, whose radiator is leaking hot air.

'TALKING WITH' suggests one reason why Great Ladies have vanished from our stage; female roles today are much too ordinary. A series of eleven short monologues for actresses, these works are brief glimpses into the lives of women on the cutting edge of some minor crisis—domestic, professional, family, or otherwise. Attributed to "Jane Martin," a pseudonym for a young writer from Kentucky, they were first staged by the Actors Theater of Louisville which, under the direction of Jon Jory, is currently producing them at the Manhattan Theater Club. Some of these vignettes are sensitive and delicate; but even the best are far too slight to hold the stage. Instead of watching a play, I imagined I was witnessing actresses trying out for parts; *Talking With* will endure, I suspect, primarily as a source of audition pieces for aspiring drama students.

Like the Eugene O'Neill Theater in Waterford, the laudable Actors Theater of Louisville has been partly functioning as a showcase for writing talent. As such, it has brought to public attention a number of young playwrights, most of them women—some, like Marsha Norman, possessed of genuine power and vision, others, like Beth Henley, essentially clever manipulators of stage whimsy. On the slight evidence of *Talking With*, "Jane Martin" could be either, depending on who does the "talking" and "with" whom. If the speaker is an actress and the auditor a spectator—as in "Fifteen Minutes," a piece about a nervous creature at a makeup table trying to "connect" with the audience, and in "Audition," about a flaky hopeful auditioning for a part with a classical piece (taking off her clothes) and a contemporary (beating a cat's head with a hammer)—then the writing tends to become cloying, its subject the agonies of being a public performer.

If, however, the character is speaking to herself, as appears to be the case in "Dragons," a monologue well-performed by Lee Anne Fahey about a young woman enduring the tortures of childbirth, then there is a parodoxical loss of self-consciousness; and when the monologue concerns a bizarre profession—snake-handling in "Handler," or baton-twirling in "Twirler," or riding and roping in "Rodeo," or being tattooed in "Marks," then our attention is momentarily held, if only through curiosity over the arcane aspects of a special mystery.

In addition to showcasing playwriting talent, the Louisville Actors Theater has also been developing some good actresses, and there are three especially accomplished performances in the evening—one by Sally Faye Reit in "Clear Glass Marbles," telling how her mother died after dropping marbles one after the other on the floor, another by Anne Pitoniak in "Lamps," creating a short essay on the relationship of light to death, which she illustrates by switching off each of the numerous lamps in her crowded attic. The third is contributed by Theresa Merritt who brings more dignity than it deserves to "French Fries," a large chuckling black woman's description of the virtues of MacDonald's hamburgers, of diseases such as "cerebral walrus," and of the pleasures of living in a plastic world—which struck me as an audition for the kind of character Hattie MacDaniel used to play when she traipsed around picking up clothes after Miz Scarlett. If more evidence were needed that there are pure gems shining on the ocean floor of Louisville, then *Talking With* provides it, but despite the high level of the acting and the clarity of the production, I was left with some question about the motives behind this presentation. Was *Talking With* created to function as a work of art, or as a display of produce for the New York marketplace? Do these pieces have not only the form of auditions, but also the motivation, in attempting to attract the attention of producers, critics, and casting agents? If so, then I hope the effort is successful, but I also hope that the future plays of "Jane Martin" display a little more grit, a little less bathos, and considerably more dimension than these slender exercises in feminine consciousness-raising.

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How To Save The Public Schools

High School Achievement: Public, Catholic, and Private Schools Compared by James S. Coleman, Thomas Hoffer, and Sally Kilgore

(Basic Books, 277 pp., $20.75)

By Phil Keisling

In 1960 six-year-old Ruby Bridges braved the taunts of white racists to become the first black to enroll in New Orleans's then-segregated public school system. Two decades later, Bridges took her three children out of that same school system and placed them in a parochial school. "I don't like to put down public schools," she said to a reporter about her son, "but he wasn't really learning the way he should have."

As Bridges painfully learned, integrating the public schools is only half the battle—and probably the easier half. A more insidious evil than segregation is a public school system that's bad and getting worse. The signs of decline—from the nineteen-year stretch of plummeting SAT scores (broken only this year by a minuscule rise) to the three hundred thousand "functional illiterates" who graduate from American high schools each year—are already familiar. Less often considered are the millions of children, many already victimized by racial prejudice and poverty, who will be consigned to lives of failure because their high school diplomas are the educational equivalent of worthless notes from the Weimar Republic.

So Bridges and a growing number of other parents are defecting to private schools, motivated not so much by strong religious convictions or a desire to ensure their children's high social status as by a conviction that the public schools have betrayed them. Some of their children are landing in plummy institutions such as Andover and Phillips Exeter; at this gilded end of the private school spectrum, competition has grown so fierce that kindergartens in Washington, D.C., charging $4,000 a year are now turning away four times as many applicants as they accept. Other children—to the delight of the new right and the outcries of liberals—are turning to fundamentalist Christian schools and white academies.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Nevertheless, the typical private school in America remains the one Bridges chose: a parochial school operated by the Catholic Church. Two-thirds of the nation's five million private school students attend such schools and, contrary to popular misconceptions, they are relatively inexpensive (tuition seldom exceeds $1,000 a year); involve little overt religious instruction (explained partly by the fact that 75 percent of all parochial school teachers are lay instructors); and have relatively unrestrictive admission and retention policies (according to one recent study, 60 percent of these schools don't expel a single student during the school year). In many inner cities—Chicago, Detroit, Washington, D.C., and New Orleans, to name just a few—the majority of parochial school students are black.

Private schools have co-existed with public ones throughout American history, but until recently they've escaped the scrutiny of the professional sociologist. University of Chicago professor James Coleman, along with associates

Phil Keisling is an editor of *The Washington Monthly*.

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Thomas Hoffer and Sally Kilgore, has now put an end to that neglect with this path-breaking study. Coleman surveyed 58,000 students in 893 public and 122 private high schools, gathering information that ranged from each school's financial resources to the attitudes of its students. Achievement tests were then given to students in the 10th and 12th grades. After performing the various mysteries of the sociologists' craft—ordinary least squares regression analyses, standard deviations, independent variable weightings—Coleman came to a disturbing conclusion. Students in a typical private school—a parochial school with larger classes, lower paid teachers, and substantially fewer resources—achieve more than those in the average public school.

WHEN COLEMAN first announced his results a year ago (this book reprints his study in more detail and includes a rebuttal to some of the major criticisms), many in the educational establishment reacted as if he'd just endorsed public hangings for juvenile delinquents. Fellow sociologists assaulted Coleman for his methodological "sloppiness" and criticized the specific techniques he used to filter out the effects on achievement of family income and race. The criticisms went beyond the normally staid bounds of academic discourse. Professor Arthur S. Goldberger of the University of Wisconsin, for example, claimed the report "reeked of incompetence and irresponsibility." Political liberals were no less upset, particularly when Coleman endorsed tuition tax credits. This last criticism—that Coleman was inappropriately enlisting social science on behalf of a controversial political issue—was somewhat ironic, since many of the same critics had used a previous Coleman study, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (1966), to justify large-scale busing to promote integration.

It doesn't take a sociologist to detect methodological shortcomings in Coleman's book. For example, Coleman doesn't fully account for the effect on a child's achievement of having parents who care enough about education to begin with that they're willing to pay private school tuition. Likewise, the achievement tests Coleman used partly measure the effects of elementary education, not high school.

Such flaws aren't surprising; after all, the only unimpeachable scientific comparison would require sending a child through a public high school, deprogramming him of everything he learned there, reversing the aging process, and after all that sending him back through a private school. But of far more interest to the general reader is the almost banal simplicity of Coleman's major conclusions. Whoever once dubbed sociology the "quantification of the intuitive and the glorification of the obvious" might have had this study in mind. Despite an occasional surprise—for example, if income and religion are equal, blacks are more likely to send their children to parochial schools than whites—his findings seem obvious. Private schools are more rigorous; their students, for example, are 50 percent more likely to have over an hour's worth of homework every night than students in public schools. Private schools impose stricter disciplinary rules and maintain more order in their classrooms. Most important, private schools put a much greater emphasis on academic subjects. Seventy percent of their students are enrolled in an academic program compared to only 34 percent for public school. Fourteen percent of private school students take a third-year language, compared to just 6 percent in the public schools. For chemistry the comparable figures are 53 percent and 37 percent; for geometry, 84 percent and 53 percent.

In other words, private schools demand more of their students—and they get more. But Coleman doesn't suggest that private schools are automatically better than public ones; in fact, according to his comparison of "high performance" public and private schools, there is little difference between the two in student achievement. Rather, Coleman's important finding is this: the characteristics that result in higher achievement are much more likely to be found in a private school than in a public one.

IT'S A SIMPLE, even obvious, conclusion; what's most interesting are the great number of people who choose to distort or ignore it entirely. Their reaction reveals the paucity of thinking these days about public education, particularly on the left. Among most Democrats, the educational agenda has only two major items: opposition to tuition tax credits and support for increased educational spending. It's a distinctly unimaginative agenda—which perhaps explains why, among those leading Democrats urging the party to formulate new ideas in response to the new right, education is barely on the radar screen. Paul Tsongas's *The Road from Here* doesn't list education among the "eight realities" Democrats need to reconsider. Mark Green's *Winning Back America* and Tom Hayden's manifesto, *The American Future*, are similarly silent.

Tuition tax credits aren't a good idea; they're more an admission of defeat than a sensible way to improve public education. But just as tuition tax credits won't revitalize our public schools, neither will the traditional liberal panacea of simply dipping deeper into the public purse. Is there good reason to believe that higher salaries for public school teachers will automatically make a substantial difference in student achievement when private school teachers work longer hours, have to manage larger classes, and make about $5,000 less per year? Unfortunately, there is no good reason, and those desiring proof need look no further than the experience of the last two decades. During that period expenditures for public elementary and secondary education increased nearly sixfold to almost $120 billion, more than keeping abreast of inflation. Meanwhile, the quality of our schools has plummeted.

ONE CAN POINT accusing fingers at the influence of TV, apathetic parents, and even junk food, but the lion's share of the blame must fall on that segment of the educational system with the most direct influence on children: the nation's 2.2 million teachers. Never particularly high, the quality of the nation's teaching corps today is embarrassingly low, and sinking further. The profession is attracting the nation's least academically gifted and creative students. Just one measure: in 1979-1980 those college students planning to major in general education scored an average of 339 on the verbal portion of the SAT—80 points below the already dismal national average. Those who justifiably might point out the imperfect link between SAT scores and teaching ability should also consider the experience of the Lemon Grove School District in Southern California. There a literacy test scaled to eighth-grade levels was given prospective teachers, all possessed of paper degrees and certificates. Thirty-five percent flunked one or more parts.

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The education methodology courses required for a teacher's certificate—usually so stultifyingly dull that most college students avoid them—are partly to blame. As J. Myron Atkin, an education professor at Stanford, has observed, "It is doubtful if as many as two dozen of the 1,300 institutions that prepare teachers are maintaining programs that a bright youngster would find demanding." Another cause is more heartening, but no less reassuring. A quarter-century ago widespread sexism gave intelligent, motivated women access to few professions other than teaching; today, those same women are pursuing careers in law, medicine, and business. Unfortunately, what is long-overdue equity for women is also our children's loss. Indeed, the aversion to the classroom of talented men and women alike provides but a sad commentary on contemporary values. Something is seriously amiss when a society gives more financial reward to those who hunch over a convoluted legal brief, in search of some new obstructionist tactic to use in an obscure contract dispute, than to those who teach a child to appreciate the eloquence of the written word or the elegance of mathematics.

THE NATION'S two major teachers' unions—the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association—don't dispute the low quality of teachers so much as enlist this unhappy situation in arguing for higher teachers' salaries. Their argument is simple: when it comes to public schools, Americans are getting what they pay for. And if they want better schools, they'll simply have to pay substantially more for better teachers.

Welcome to the great circular argument of public education. In the abstract, higher teacher salaries are both fair and sensible. Yet in the real world, what would be the result if teachers' salaries were doubled overnight? Very little, except that the incompetent and mediocre teachers now in the classroom would get a lot more money—and would probably be that much less inclined to quit.

That latter point is important because replacing bad teachers with good ones, after all, is the whole raison d'être of raising salaries. But retirement or resignation now are about the only ways to get rid of incompetent teachers; administrators, school board members, and even candid teachers will admit that firing a tenured teacher—and most fall into that category after just three years' experience—is virtually impossible. In the name of the great liberal shibboleth of "due process," such a warren of legal obstacles has been erected that only in the most egregious cases do school districts even bother to initiate dismissal proceedings. In the last six years, for example, Philadelphia has dismissed only 24 of its 13,000 teachers; a typical dismissal takes two years, and involves expensive legal fees.

Short of changing various rules governing tenure and due process, both the AFT and the NEA contend that better teachers can be incorporated into the ranks over a period of years. (To help ensure the quality of these new teachers, the AFT favors some competency testing; the NEA steadfastly opposes any measurement attempts.) But putting aside the question of whether the nation's children should be forced to wait several decades for these better teachers so no one has to be fired, this gradual approach has a graver flaw: it won't work.

Again, it's important to focus on the educational world as it is. The American Federation of Teachers predicts 55,000 existing teachers will be laid off this school year—which hardly leaves much room for those bright, new hirees. (Incidentally, union contracts usually dictate that lay-offs be on the basis of seniority, not competence—yet another way bad teachers are protected while our schools deteriorate). Nor is there much reason to expect such lay-offs will abate, notwithstanding the unions' warnings that a slight rise in student enrollments toward the end of this decade will help spawn a new teacher shortage. Student enrollments peaked twelve years ago, yet in 1981 there were more elementary and secondary teachers than at any other time in the nation's history. The

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explanation lies in the "shrinking classroom": in 1962 there were 25.6 students per teacher while today there are just 18.9. If the nation were to return to the 1962 ratio, it could lay off almost 500,000 more teachers. That would be unwise, to be sure, but further decreases are hardly unreasonable, especially when one considers that the traditional argument for smaller classes has been improved quality of education. But in light of recent history, that's hardly a compelling argument—which perhaps explains why both the AFT and the NEA are increasingly trying to make classroom size a negotiable item in collective bargaining agreements.

Higher salaries for some teachers may prove necessary to improve our public schools; indeed, the dire shortage of math and science teachers now plaguing most districts can be resolved in the near term only by paying more for these specialities. (Again, the NEA and to a lesser extent the AFT oppose such salary differentials, insisting that salaries for all teachers, even those in oversubscribed fields such as English and social studies, rise together.) But absent other changes in our public schools, spending more money will only produce more dashed expectations.

This is where the Coleman report holds its most important lesson. Rather than glorifying private education, the report suggests that public schools would be wise to emulate the best aspects of private schools—aspects which have little to do with money. One of the most obvious places to begin is with academic requirements. Fewer than half of our public high schools now require more than one year of math and science for graduation; little wonder a recent National Science Foundation report warned that ours is a nation fast approaching "scientific illiteracy." As reflected in the dearth of third-year language students, foreign language requirements are virtually unknown in American schools. Our schools' neglect of both science and foreign languages stands in glaring contrast to the schools of Western Europe and Japan, countries whose economies, not so incidentally, are more robust than our own.

Certainly not all private schools offer adequate academic programs. Some—particularly fundamentalist Christian schools—lose more from narrow-mindedness than they gain in rigor. Even so, as Coleman discovered, parochial schools have proved far less susceptible to the academic relativism in which a course entitled "TV—The Medium is the Message" is put on a par with one teaching the basics of grammar and expository writing.

Another characteristic that Coleman linked to higher achievement is the private school's insistence on a more orderly learning environment. Not only did parochial schools have stricter disciplinary standards, but their students were more likely to feel they were treated "fairly" than their public school counterparts. Perhaps more important, whereas one in ten public school students rated their teachers' interest in them as "excellent," for parochial schools, where the classes were even larger, the figure was one in four. Of course, one cannot expect public schools to duplicate the spiritual mys-

SEVENTEEN HAIKU

1
They told me something,
the evening and the mountain.
And now I've lost it.

2
The limitless night
at this moment is nothing
more than a fragrance.

3
This is, isn't it,
the dream I dreamed and forgot
just before daybreak?

4
The chords fade away.
The music intuited
my inner feelings.

5
The almond blossoms
hold no cheer for me today.
They are so like you.

6
In utter darkness
books, pictures, a ring of keys
are bound to my fate.

7
From that day till this
I've not shifted the pieces
across the chessboard.

8
In the wilderness
dawn happens, filling the sky.
Does anyone know?

9
The idle broadsword
goes on dreaming its battles.
I dream something else.

10
The man has passed on.
His beard's unaware of it.
His nails keep growing.

11
Once upon a time
this was the hand that caressed
your flowing tresses.

12
Here beneath these eaves
the mirror shows no image
other than the moon's.

13
Here beneath the moon
the shadow that keeps growing
is one vast shadow.

14
Is it an empire,
this light that is going out—
or a firefly's glow?

15
The new moon on high.
She too is gazing at it
from another door.

16
Distantly, a trill.
The nightingale does not know
that it consoles you.

17
This old hand of mine
goes on setting down verses
for oblivion.

JORGE LUIS BORGES

translated from the Spanish by Norman Thomas di Giovanni

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tique of parochial schools, where the implied presence of a higher moral authority suffuses the classrooms. But public schools can and should pay far more attention to fostering a coherent set of shared values and establishing more clear-cut lines of authority—if for no other reason than students themselves seem to prefer it.

As for specific disciplinary measures, the Coleman report suggests that public schools need to reevaluate some dearly held notions. In theory, any child can be transformed into an attentive student with a little understanding and patience. In practice, that noble sentiment is one of the most destructive illusions of modern education. It takes only a few disruptive students to poison the learning atmosphere for everyone. Many of these students should be removed from regular classrooms so that teachers can focus their energies on students who've shown a willingness to learn. This at first may sound harsh and uncompassionate, but it's far less cruel than denying a much greater number of students a decent education. In our insistence on giving as many children as possible the traditional token of success—the high school diploma—we've inadvertently ensured that far too many of them will fail later in life.

PERHAPS the most important lesson of private schools—and one Coleman unfortunately didn't examine—involves teachers. Almost no private schools require teaching certificates; instead, the emphasis is on whether instructors know their subjects and can teach them well. Pay in private schools is substantially lower than in public ones, but outstanding performance is usually rewarded with merit pay. Teachers who prove to be incompetent can be easily fired or simply not re-hired when their contracts come up for renewal.

Compare this with public schools. Only people with proper credentials can teach, even though many without them know their subject far better than those who hold them. Once in the classroom, most of these teachers are paid without regard to ability or the need for their services, but according to seniority and the possession of additional academic degrees. While a beginning math teacher might get $12,000 a year (assuming the school district can find one), an English teacher with 15 years' experience and a master's degree can command twice as much or more—even

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though he performs far worse than his younger, lesser-paid colleagues. The result is a system that protects incompetent teachers, demoralizes excellent ones, and makes mediocrity the best most of our children can hope for.

The major defenders of this system—the AFT and the NEA—once offered their members badly needed protection from the caprices of administrators and the penury of school boards. But the unions have succeeded all too well, having grown sufficiently powerful to undermine the quality of public education in the name of protecting their members. When a bad teacher is kept in the classroom while a far better candidate waits in the wings for a job opening, the children are the real losers.

SOLVING THIS PROBLEM doesn't require abolishing the unions so much as forcing them to stop having it both ways. On the one hand, the unions demand that their members be treated as "professionals," with commensurate salary and status; on the other, that they should effectively be immune from judgments of quality. As is the case with academic requirements, the relativism behind the credo that "all teachers are equal" allows schools to avoid difficult decisions about the merit of individuals—but in the process undermines excellence. A similar attitude has been all too prevalent on automobile assembly lines, where quality control is ultimately someone else's responsibility. The defective automobile that results can always be recalled; unfortunately, the same is not true for children with defective educations.

Instituting stricter curricular and disciplinary standards will be relatively easy; what will truly test the sincerity of liberals who claim they want to reverse the decline of public education is their treatment of teacher's unions. They are among the nation's most powerful lobbies; the NEA alone provided over 10 percent of the delegates and alternates to the 1980 Democratic National Convention. Their power is even greater on the state level, where they often lead the PACs in spending for legislative races. The bulk of their largesse is lavished on Democrats.

Unfortunately, most liberals aren't showing the stomach for this necessary battle with their traditional allies, preferring instead to tell themselves that the problems with our nation's schools can be solved with a bit more money here, a few more specialized programs there. But such incrementalism is a prescription for the continued deterioration of our public schools, and as they fail the nation loses more than just the well-educated citizenry it needs to compete successfully in an increasingly competitive international economy. The failure of our schools also threatens democracy itself. As more people abandon the public schools to those too poor to escape them, ours becomes a society increasingly stratified, not so much by race as by social class.

Is such a bleak outcome inevitable? Not at all. In fact, for all its criticism of the public schools, Coleman's study is strangely heartening, far more so than his 1966 study mentioned earlier. Fifteen years ago, Coleman concluded that the most important determinant of a child's achievement was his socioeconomic background and that of his peers; little could alter the educational outcome except perhaps trying to mix rich white children with poor black ones—hence the resulting passion for busing.

This latest report suggests an opposite and far more optimistic conclusion: schools *do* make a difference. Though Coleman found that the achievement gap between white and minority students widened between the 10th and 12th grade in public schools, he found it actually narrowed in private ones. Strange as it may sound, that should be comforting news *especially* to liberals, for it suggests that schools really can overcome the debilitating effects of poverty and race.

This is why it's so distressing that, so far, the lessons of the Coleman report have been embraced mainly by conservatives. Indeed, one of the most dismaying failures of American liberalism has been its allowing the right to assume the initiative in calling attention to the deterioration of our public schools. The public understandably has grown impatient with those who make excuses for poor schools or seek refuge in unrealistic—and discredited—solutions such as large, new infusions of public money. Conservative nostrums such as tuition tax credits aren't much better and are probably worse; unfortunately, for many parents concerned about their children's education, they're the only game in town.

Good public schools needn't become an endangered species. But if their ostensible friends continue to ignore danger signs such as the Coleman report, it won't take a sociologist to perform a post-mortem. Parents like Ruby Bridges could just as easily explain what went wrong.

A LIBERAL SPIRIT

A Margin of Hope: An Intellectual Autobiography by Irving Howe

(Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 368 pp., $14.95)

Toward the end of this richly furnished memoir, Irving Howe lingers with sad exasperation over the demise of the new left in the late 1960s, and the way it had repeated the disastrous errors of earlier radical movements: "posturings of rectitude, fantasies of violence, a complete incapacity to attend the pulse of American experience." It is by reference to that latter phenomenon—the observable rhythms of actual life, especially in this country—that Howe has come more and more to test an idea, an attitude, a political loyalty, a critical position, even to some extent a literary text. And as he rehearses his "intellectual autobiography" from about 1933 onward, he constantly brings to bear on it, ruefully or trenchantly, his successive discoveries of the realities of human history, as against the categories of ideology, whether political or aesthetic.

This is the best kind of pragmatism, and it makes for a winning narrative. Howe does full justice, for example, to his youthful involvement in radical politics, especially as a member of the Trotskyist group. The Trotskyist "sect" (Howe's word) gave him and his teenage associates "the sense that we had gained not merely a purpose but a coherent perspective upon everything

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happening in the world," so that never before or since has he lived "at so high, so intense a pitch, been so absorbed in ideas beyond the smallness of self." The chief ideological position provided by the Trotskyists, needless to say, was implacable hostility to the Stalinist "betrayal of the socialist revolution" and to Stalinism as a force on the American scene. Yet Howe recognizes without rancor the marginal nature of Trotskyism as a would-be movement in America: "once the Trotskyists ventured on a politics of their own, trying in the America of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to resurrect the tired bones of Leninism, they shrank to a historical oddity." More than most backward glances at this political period by sometime radicals, Howe's is perfectly willing to acknowledge the historical fact of the Rooseveltian achievement and to appreciate it: "The major cause of socialist decline could be put in one word: Roosevelt. That canny politician, half savior and half confidence man, ruined us." That is exactly right, every wry word of it, as is Howe's additional notation that Roosevelt triumphed despite having failed to pull us out of the Depression until we were rescued by the war.

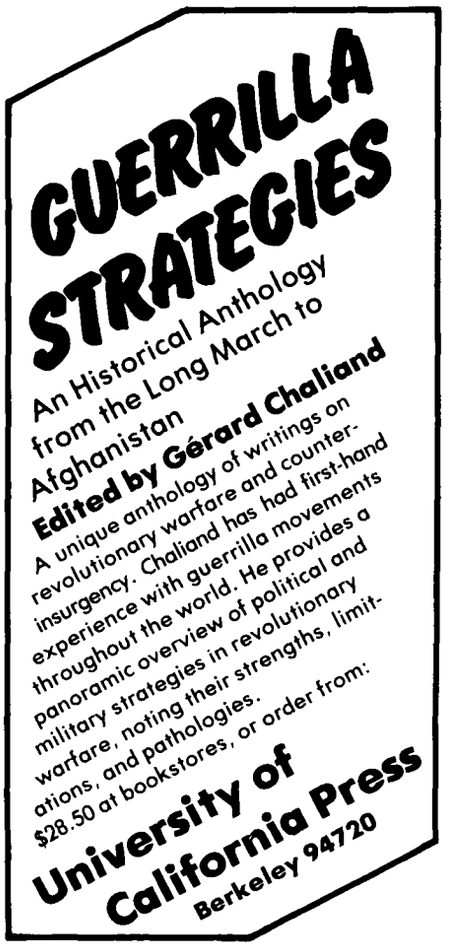
IN 1942, Howe helped organize a new political gathering, not quite a party, calling itself the Independent Socialist League, with a political style, Howe recalls, quite different from that of the Trotskyists—less dogmatic, "softer in tone and texture," with a good deal of earnest talk about "the proletariat." This enterprise, as that last foreign-born phrase might hint, was practically formulated not to get very far; and in any case about this time Howe was drafted and sent to Anchorage, Alaska, where he spent two years sorting records and reading any volume that came across his bunk (a biography of Stalin, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, the essays of Matthew Arnold), and catching an occasional glimpse of a courtly, white-haired sergeant named Dashiell Hammett.

When he came back to New York and the postwar world, Howe discovered that history had continued to outwit the theorists: the war had not brought down the enemies, capitalism was flourishing in the Western countries, and Stalinist Russia was stable and expanding. Taking a long look at it all, and with a shy burgeoning admiration for America's political system, Howe and his friends began to agree "that for us the prime value was democracy, and that without it we could not even imagine a desirable socialism." They took to calling themselves Social Democrats. It was a long journey, this trip to democracy. But it has an allegorical fitness to it, beginning, as it should have, with the great garment workers' strike of 1933, and its radicalizing impact on Howe's family and Bronx neighborhood, moving persistently if erratically toward reality and the real historical imperatives, and arriving where it should have arrived.

It was as a Social Democrat that Howe, in 1953, founded the magazine *Dissent*, an intellectually sturdy periodical that would more than justify its existence a decade or so later. But by 1953 Irving Howe had also become a literary commentator of increasing weight and ability. Soon after the war, he had fallen among those writers and theorists whom Howe himself has designated as "the New York intellectuals," and about whom he published a long, searching essay more than a decade ago. The center of energy for this gentry was of course *Partisan Review*, to the faintly dubious enshrinement of which William Barrett, a former editor, has recently contributed his memorial, *The Truants*. Revisiting that scene in memory, Howe finds again that it was as disunited as it was lively. "Of visible community there were few signs that I could see," he writes, meditating on the entity presided over by Philip Rahv. "This was a gang of intellectual freebooters," and he quotes with pleasure the allusion of Harold Rosenberg to "the herd of independent minds."

HOWE CREDITS *Partisan Review* and the New York intellectuals of the 1950s with establishing for American readers the enormous fact of European literary modernism. This may be true in a general way, though Harry Levin, up north at Harvard, had been leading the charge for a decade or so (his critical biography of James Joyce came out in 1941, at which time Levin was also teaching a seminar on Proust, Joyce, and Mann). And Howe, who was never really a card-carrying member of the metropolitan literary party, himself did as much as anyone to propagate modernism, with his anthology *The Idea of the Modern* and, among others, his volume of essays, *The Decline of the New*.

A common cultural flaw among those addicts of modernism, Howe acknowl-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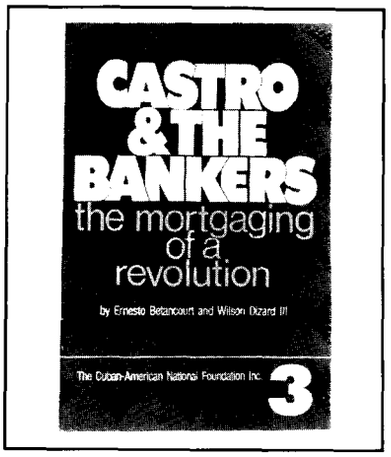
CASTRO & THE BANKERS
the mortgaging of a revolution
by Ernesto Betancourt and Wilson Dizard III
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3

The Cuban government has announced its inability to repay its foreign debt. **Castro and the Bankers: The Mortgaging of a Revolution**, by Ernesto F. Betancourt and Wilson P. Dizard III, released earlier this summer, provides background analysis on the sources and uses of Havana's debt to Western banks and the Soviet Union, and discusses the consequences of rescheduling.

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edges, was an ignorance of, and an indifference to, the native literary tradition. Howe takes this as a less serious defect than I do; in retrospect there is something curiously limited and walleyed about the European enthusiasms of *Partisan Review* at just the moment (the 1950s) when American literature for the first time was being fully explored, codified, appraised, and celebrated by such critics and scholars (following the example of F. O. Matthiessen) as Alfred Kazin, Richard Chase, Marius Bewley, Charles Feidelson, and Leslie Fiedler. But again Howe errs toward modesty: he had from the outset of his critical career been addressing himself to American writers—books on Anderson and Faulkner (1951,1952) and then essays on Henry James, Dreiser, E. A. Robinson, Edith Wharton, and his own contemporaries.

The simultaneous appeal of modernism, with its characteristically conservative political temper and its revulsion from everything that might otherwise be called "modern," and radical politics, with its asserted faith in the future historical victory: this has long been a familiar and yet a mysterious phenomenon. No one has represented that twin commitment more eloquently than Irving Howe; and in *A Margin of Hope* he goes back over the paradoxes and tensions involved—to conclude with another look at the momentous event that caused the hidden anxieties, as Howe puts it, to break out into the open. This was the award—by a jury that included Eliot, Tate, Auden, and Robert Lowell—of the Bollingen prize to Ezra Pound for his *Pisan Cantos* of 1948. A great deal of ink has been spilled over this episode (and at one point, when Allen Tate challenged William Barrett to a duel, it seemed that some blood might be spilled as well); but in my view it has never been handled better than here by Irving Howe. My judgment is no doubt colored by our shared opinion of Pound, whose work and voice make us grimace.

But on the issues of the Bollingen case, Howe is worth listening to:

> Two separate questions were entangled here: one, the public propriety of honoring a profascist and anti-Semitic writer even if he had written the best poetry of 1948, and the other, far more complicated, whether or how fascism or anti-Semitic matter can be lodged in poetry taken to be great.

As to the first, Howe proposes that the jury might more wisely have held that Pound probably did write the best poetry that year, but that when aesthetic standards and human values clash, the latter must be taken as primary; and so no award would be given for 1948. The second and more troublesome question led Howe to reconsider the principle of "aesthetic autonomy." He ascribes to the New Critics in this era a position that would not in fact be explicitly espoused until the newer critical breed of the New Haven persuasion twenty-five years later—and rejects it. This is the view that

> a poem was not to be grasped in its essential being through references to the world of familiar experience, for the poem is not an "imitation" of that world, the poem inhabits a realm of its own. The offending lines in the *Cantos* thus would not contain a statement in the sense that an essay contains statements; those in the poem must be seen as self-contained matter.

The "statements" referred to included such lines as "Pétain defended Verdun while Blum/Was defending a bidet"; and Howe finds it impossible to accept any theory that divorces those lines from an external historical reality. In all sincerity, and in the words of an English military friend, I couldn't possibly begin not to disagree with him less. Pound's Pisan poem, on occasions like this, is so morally revolting as to be aesthetically rotten.

For five years, beginning in 1949, Howe lived in Princeton, where his wife had a job teaching Latin. He would later decide that he had been repelled by the "chilled graces and Anglophile snobbery" of the university and the town, but he adds his own colorful testimony about the local literati to that, recently, of Russell Fraser in his fascinating but vexatious biography of R. P. Blackmur, and Eileen Simpson's vivid and moving recollections of the Princeton clan of gifted, self-dismantling poets, her husband John Berryman and Delmore Schwartz among them. (As a matter of fact, the shrewdest and the most intimately knowledgeable account of literary and intellectual life in Princeton, during this epoch, is an unpublished—but eminently publishable—200-page report written by Robert Fitzgerald for the Rockefeller Foundation.)

AS IT HAPPENED, it was in Princeton and at this time that I first met Irving Howe, and here I should confess that it has been an eerie experience for me to read this memoir. I can name a number of other people of a certain age who will have the same dislocating reaction: one's own life seems to unfold before one in these pages, stage by remembered stage, slightly blurred here, a bit misplaced there, with some of the names changed. In my case, the parallels with Howe's life story carry forward through college and war years, a remotely comparable political alertness, apprenticeship in the postwar literary periodicals (I was a *Hudson Review* boy, being too bookish and American for *Partisan;* Rahv always called me "professor"), a lengthy spell and a Gauss seminar at Princeton, *und so weiter*. The parallels are symbolized for me by our common affection—a politico-literary affection, as it were—for the writings and the personal presence of Ignazio Silone.

This being so, I permit myself some divergences of opinion about the cultural history we have both lived through. As to the crucial part of that history that we did *not* share, the American Jewish experience, I can only say that for this outsider Howe moves through the perplexities and the passions with great intellectual dignity. But Howe strikes me throughout as a bit tone-deaf regarding the religious pulsa-

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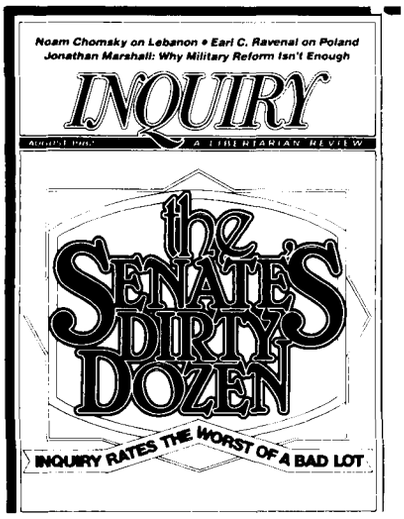
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tions of the age, Christian or otherwise. He observes with bafflement the religious striving of a Newton Arvin ("I probably missed its finer shadings," he says, which suggests he missed much more than that); and there is no cognizance, amid the cultural welter Howe is so handsomely evoking, of the theological performance of a Jacques Maritain or the cunningly perverse Catholicism of a Flannery O'Connor.

Howe in turn may want to diagnose me as tone-deaf on the political side; for I do differ from him in a long-standing inability, historically nurtured, to fear and detest Communism (any mode of it) as much as I have feared and detested Fascism and the Nazis. And wisps of the old, harsh, discarded dialectics seem still to cling to Howe when he writes, speaking of the anti-Vietnam War movement: "We were stuck, those of us who opposed American involvement in Vietnam yet did not favor a communist victory." This leaves an awful lot of us stranded atop the excluded middle.

BUT HOWE IS STAUNCH on the McCarthy period, and shows none of the signs one notices with dismay elsewhere of re-arranging his mind about the evil; he has the right to recall with pride having written and acted on the conviction that McCarthyism was as threatening nationally as Stalinism was on the international stage. But probably Howe's finest hour was in the late 1960s, during his bruising encounters—in fact and in the pages of *Dissent*—with the new left, SDS, and other factions of the moment. Booed more than once in public for his desperate rationalism, his attachment to democratic procedures and expressed historical awareness, Howe kept his head while platoons of intellectuals and political savants were all around him losing theirs. The best he got for his pains was an amiable admonishment from a political theorist at Amherst: "The trouble with your social democratic politics is that it's so boring." The comment, Howe says, has haunted him ever since. "Between my political beliefs and the dark reaches of our century there is obviously a gap." Maybe so; but it may also be the gap that saves. It has protected him from the instant fanaticisms of our era; and it has brought him time and again to insist that public rhetoric, however worthy the cause, show a respect for what he calls "the actualities of our lives."

But *A Margin of Hope* is far more than a mulling over of political and literary attitudes and experiences. It is a work of literary distinction, beautifully composed—its artful pacing would repay close study—and set forth in prose rhythms of an exceptionally high order. One of the happiest things to watch over the decades, in the world of American letters, has been Irving Howe's development as a prose stylist, to the point where, to my ear, his is the most resonant voice we have on anything that touches our cultural situation, our civilized discontents.

In this autobiography, the style quickens and illumines the whole long act of memory, as some of the passages quoted may perhaps indicate. It can equally provide superbly worded snapshots of individual figures. Here is Robert Fitzgerald, a fellow book reviewer at *Time*, keeping his cool at the weekly conference "by assuming an air of unbroken gravity, as if he were a monk bound hostage to a gang of heretics." Here is R. P. Blackmur in Princeton: "Small, neatly turned out, a shade dandyish, speaking in a weighty, murmurous monotone." About Hannah Arendt, Howe says that "she bristled with intellectual charm"; think that over. He conjures up for us with dark enjoyment the persona of Louis Kampf, an M.I.T. professor and member of the new left who somehow got himself elected president of the Modern Language Association. After listing some of the critical stances taken by Kampf at a forum in Philadelphia—Jonathan Swift, Marcel Proust, and the whole body of Greek tragedy were to be dismissed as counterrevolutionary—Howe goes on: "Yet I know Louie, he isn't really a commissar, he wouldn't hurt a fly, he has simply been driven out of his wits by the *Zeitgeist*." And there are graver portraits, like that of the Columbia historian Richard Hofstadter, a New York neighbor who gave off "a mild glow of charm and sanity" such that "there was profit even in his silence." Howe attributes to Hofstadter, as he does to Lionel Trilling, the supreme quality of "liberalism of spirit."

Howe ends with an unavoidably jaundiced look at the present:

> This is a moment—the early eighties—of peculiar sordidness. It's as if the spirit of the old robber barons had been triumphantly resurrected, as if the most calloused notions of Social Darwinism were back with us, as if the celebrations of greed we associate with the nineteenth century were reenacted a century later.

The utterance is not despondent, but vigorous, coldly wrathful, that of a learned and experienced man about to gird up. Hence the hope.

R.W.B. LEWIS

KENTUCKY CAMEOS

Shiloh and Other Stories by Bobbie Ann Mason

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People who associate *The New Yorker* with fragile, sophisticated, often eventless short stories have been receiving a few surprises lately. One was a story called "Shiloh," in which a trucker temporarily grounded by an accident tried to grow closer to his wife only to learn that she had mentally left him far behind and was preparing to fly. Another was "Nancy Culpepper," about a one-time country girl's return to her senile grandmother's house to search for an antique photograph of her namesake. In "Offerings," a grandmother and a mother tried to put a good face on a visit to the chaotic rural cabin of a young woman with a disintegrating marriage, and in "Third Monday," a woman fell deeply, silently in love with a man who traveled the fleamarket circuit trading pocketknives and hound dogs.

The author of these stories is Bobbie Ann Mason, and to say that she is a "new" writer is to give entirely the wrong impression, for there is nothing unformed or merely promising about her. She is a full-fledged master of the

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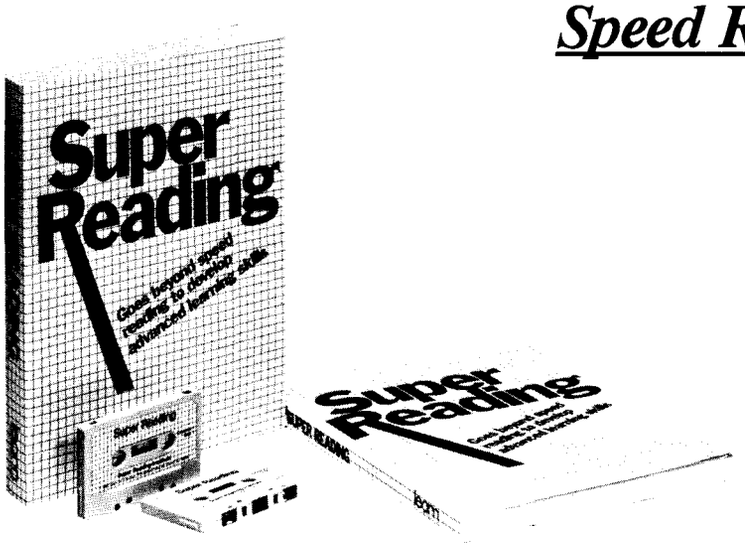

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short story, and *Shiloh and Other Stories*, her first collection, is a treasure.

Her characters are backwoods Kentuckians, for the most part, and they're so vividly and lovingly portrayed that we feel we know everything about them. We know their food: the potato and mushroom-soup casseroles, uncooked fruitcake made with graham cracker crumbs and marshmallows, and marshmallow-centered sweet-potato balls rolled in crushed cornflakes. We know their clothing: the women's pantsuits and the men's Worm-and-Germ caps from the feed mill. We know they earn their living selling Tupperware or clerking in Kroger's, the K-Mart, or J.C. Penney, and they pass their free time making latch-hook wall hangings of an Arizona sunset.

They talk of "curtain material, Edda's granddaughter's ovary infection, a place that appeared on Thelma's arm, and the way the climate has changed." They speak of a "datsun dog" and an "old stringling cat." What they say comes through so clearly and directly that their voices ring through our living rooms. "You don't make over me any more," a wife tells her husband sadly. A mother apologizes for a cranky child: "I reckon sooner or later she was bound to show out." Their English is often ungrammatical and filled with gangling, country-style similes, but not a one of these people is described with anything less than complete respect.

Characters alone, of course, don't make a story, no matter how quirky or colorful; nor does an eagle eye or a perfect-pitch ear. What matters finally is that the story enlarge our view of human beings, and these do. They are extraordinarily touching, in the most delicate and apparently effortless way. They explore, usually, the sense of bewilderment and anxious hopefulness that people feel when suddenly confronted with change. It is especially poignant that the characters in these stories, having led more sheltered lives than the average reader, are trying to deal with changes most of us already take for granted.

"One day I was listening to Hank Williams and shelling corn for the chickens and the next day I was expected to know what wines went with what," Nancy Culpepper says. The women in "Third Monday" are throwing a traditional baby shower, but the mother-to-be is a proudly unwed thirty-seven-year-old, and since amniocentesis has divined the baby's sex the cake reads WELCOME HOLLY. In "Graveyard Day," a divorcee who's considering remarriage finds herself unable to accept the idea that families should "shift membership, like clubs." A stepfather for her daughter, she thinks, would be "something like a sugar substitute," something like "a substitute host on a talk show."

The trucker husband in "Shiloh," baffled by his wife's body-building exercises and her recipes for "unusual foods" like tacos and lasagna, tries desperately to maintain some link with her:

> Norma Jean works at the Rexall drugstore, and she has acquired an amazing amount of information about cosmetics. When she explains to Leroy the three stages of complexion care, involving creams, toners, and moisturizers, he thinks happily of other petroleum products—axle grease, diesel fuel. This is a connection between him and Norma Jean.

In "Rookers"—a jewel of a story that's evidently never been published elsewhere—a lonely father searches for a link with his modern, rather brittle college daughter. Thinking she's taking a philosophy course, he struggles through *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* until his daughter comes home and tells him it's physics she's studying. In "A New-Wave Format," a middle-aged bus driver who's worried about losing the up-to-the-minute young girl he lives with "suddenly blurts out so much praise for [her] zucchini bread that Sabrina looks at him oddly."

The situations are all the more affecting because the characters try so hard, and with such optimism, to keep up with change instead of fighting against it. They have an earnest faith in progress; they are as quick to absorb new brand names as foreigners trying to learn the language of a strange country they've found themselves in. "Louise," we are told precisely, "threw a Corning Ware Petite Pan at Tom and made his ear bleed." Following an earthquake warning, a family flees to Arizona, "and Dusty took her new set of Teflon II pans with her."

It's heartening to find male characters portrayed sympathetically, with an appreciation for the fact they can feel as confused and hurt and lonely as the female characters. These truck drivers, bus drivers, and carpenters show an endearing sensitivity and alertness to others.

And "simple" though these people may be, they are fully capable of moments of insight that are remarkably perceptive but never strained. Just watch the wife realizing suddenly why she's spent weeks painting nothing but watermelons after her husband left her; or another wife all at once comprehending what's behind her husband's compulsive calls to the weather recording; or the daughter putting her finger, with perfect accuracy, on the reason for her mother's bringing up a gruesome news story.

There's not an overstatement in the book, in fact. Look at Waldeen, the divorcee, pondering on her ex-husband:

> She is better off without Joe Murdock. If he were still in town, he would do something to make her look foolish, such as paint her name on his car door. He once had WALDEEN painted in large red letters on the door of his LTD. It was like a tattoo. It is probably a good thing he is in Arizona. Still, she cannot really understand why he had to move so far away from home.

Have I mentioned that, for all the sorrow contained in these stories, they are also hilarious? Did I neglect to say you're likely to find yourself in tears on several occasions? But you'll find that out for yourself. Go buy this book. Don't borrow it, don't look for it in the library, but buy it, as a way of casting your vote for real literature.

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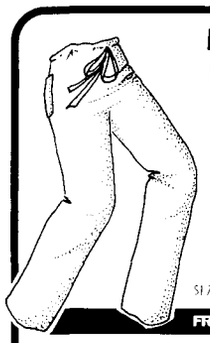

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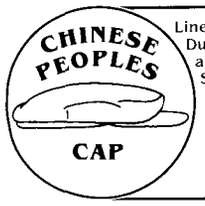

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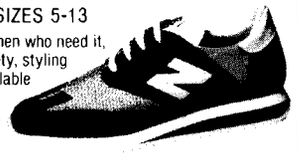

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NEW DELHI DIARIST

Curiosities

FOR THE UPPER CRUST of government ministers, officials, businessmen, and diplomats, New Delhi is a pleasant city of tree-lined streets, spacious lawns, and smoothly running facilities. The elite are spared the chronic water shortages and power failures that plague the general public. The majority of citizens must sweat out the four hottest months, May through August, when taps are dry most of the day and an erratic electricity supply shuts fans off for hours at a time. Public transport seems even more ancient and overcrowded, and noise becomes more of a trial in the merciless heat. In my neighborhood a Sikh *gurdwara* (house of worship) starts its four-hour morning session on loudspeakers at 4:30 a.m., and resumes its sermons in the evening. Worship reaches a deafening climax on Sunday mornings, when bus loads of families converge on the *gurdwara* and the hoot and grind of traffic mixed with bright chatter nearly drown out the uproar on the loudspeaker. It is a tribute to the mysterious fortitude of the Indian public that the people in the neighborhood are not deaf, mad, or in revolt. No one expects the vast, cumbersome bureaucracy to render basic essential services, even one so simple as a ban on earsplitting noise. For action on any matter, from asking for a longer telephone cord at the Ministry of Communications to receiving the allotment of a gas cylinder for your kitchen, you must take your complaint to a reigning politician or his henchman. These days you can't do better than go to the member of Parliament who is in charge of the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Trust, and who, also a Nehru relative, is the most powerful person after Mrs. Gandhi and her sole surviving son, Rajiv. A command from the top works like magic, and if things go wrong later, well, you never expected them to work forever.

THIS YEAR huge evacuated areas, where nine five-star hotels are under construction, have added to the capital's confusion. Hoteliers have promised the government that 2,679 rooms will be ready by November for the opening of the Asian Games, but by now it is clear that estimate was overly optimistic. And they are not likely to fill the rooms later; their prices will be far beyond the Indian consumer's means. Tickets for the games went on sale recently, but, like film festival tickets, they have disappeared into the black market. If you can't get tickets to events, you can watch them on TV (if you are among the TV-owning elite), or you can buy one of the 90,000 color sets (India currently has only black and white) the government has cleared for import, at $750 a set.

THE MONSOON SESSION of Parliament, which runs during July and August, ended on a stormy note, with debates in both Houses of Parliament on the Bihar state government's bill to stop press criticism of the government. The bill would allow any magistrate to arrest and jail journalists (who would not have the right to seek bail) for six months to two years if their reporting offends the government, and for five years for a second offense. It also would bar criticism from outside the state, providing for action against distributors, vendors, and even readers of such material. Bihar, ruled by Mrs. Gandhi's party, is the third state government (after Tamil Nadu and Orissa) to take draconian measures against free expression. The spectacle of authority revolting against factual reporting may be a sign that the press throughout India is investigating abuses of power more energetically. Or it could mean that political corruption has reached proportions that can no longer be concealed. Since radio and TV are under government control, the press is the only independent mass medium. Those in power increasingly see it as a threat. The Bihar bill cannot become law without the central government's assent. Strongly worded editorials and demonstrations by journalists' organizations around the country may get the measure temporarily shelved. But in the long run the ruling party's own philosophy will decide whether this and other fundamental rights remain sacrosanct. Its record is already tainted by its restrictive practices during the Emergency, and its present attitude is far from clear. People keep telling themselves the Center believes in press freedom, since its spokesmen keep saying so, but repeated warnings that "scurrilous" writing and "irresponsible" journalism must be punished leave one with the impression that it is not averse to piecemeal crackdowns. It is possible that censorship will be introduced as a regular feature of life, which would make another central crackdown —so unpopular during the Emergency —unnecessary. And the Center may be looking for this kind of oblique solution to its own discomfort. The press recently exposed a major scandal in the ruling family that involved a deal for diesel oil made by the government-owned Indian Oil Corporation in February 1980 with the Kuo Oil Company of Hong Kong. The $175-million contract was made on Sanjay Gandhi's order, against the advice of experts in the IOC and the Petroleum Ministry. It cost the national exchequer $40 million.

ONE OF THE CURIOSITIES of the Indian political scene: a trust has been set up in Sanjay's name, his car project has been nationalized (although it has failed to produce a single car), and the country's youth is exhorted to follow in his footsteps—at the same time that his widow, Menaka, who intends to launch her own party consisting of Sanjay's closest followers, has been declared persona non grata by her mother-in-law. Menaka has announced her decision to contest the next election to Parliament from Amethi, the constituency now represented by her brother-in-law, Rajiv. Meanwhile she lives in a rented house in New Delhi, and seems undaunted that her home and activities are under 24-hour surveillance by the government's largest intelligence agency.

LEADING NEWSPAPERS have called Mrs. Gandhi's recent visit to America a personal triumph. Its concrete achievement could be that the American government and media appear to have taken the idea of family rule in stride. Indian sentiment will be harder to win, for Indians have the kind of stubborn faith in democracy that has withstood waterless taps and monumental corruption. They may yet withstand the royalist ambitions of their leaders.

NAYANTARA SAHGAL

Nayantara Sahgal, a niece of Jawaharal Nehru, is a novelist and the author of *Indira Gandhi: Her Road to Power* (Frederick Ungar).

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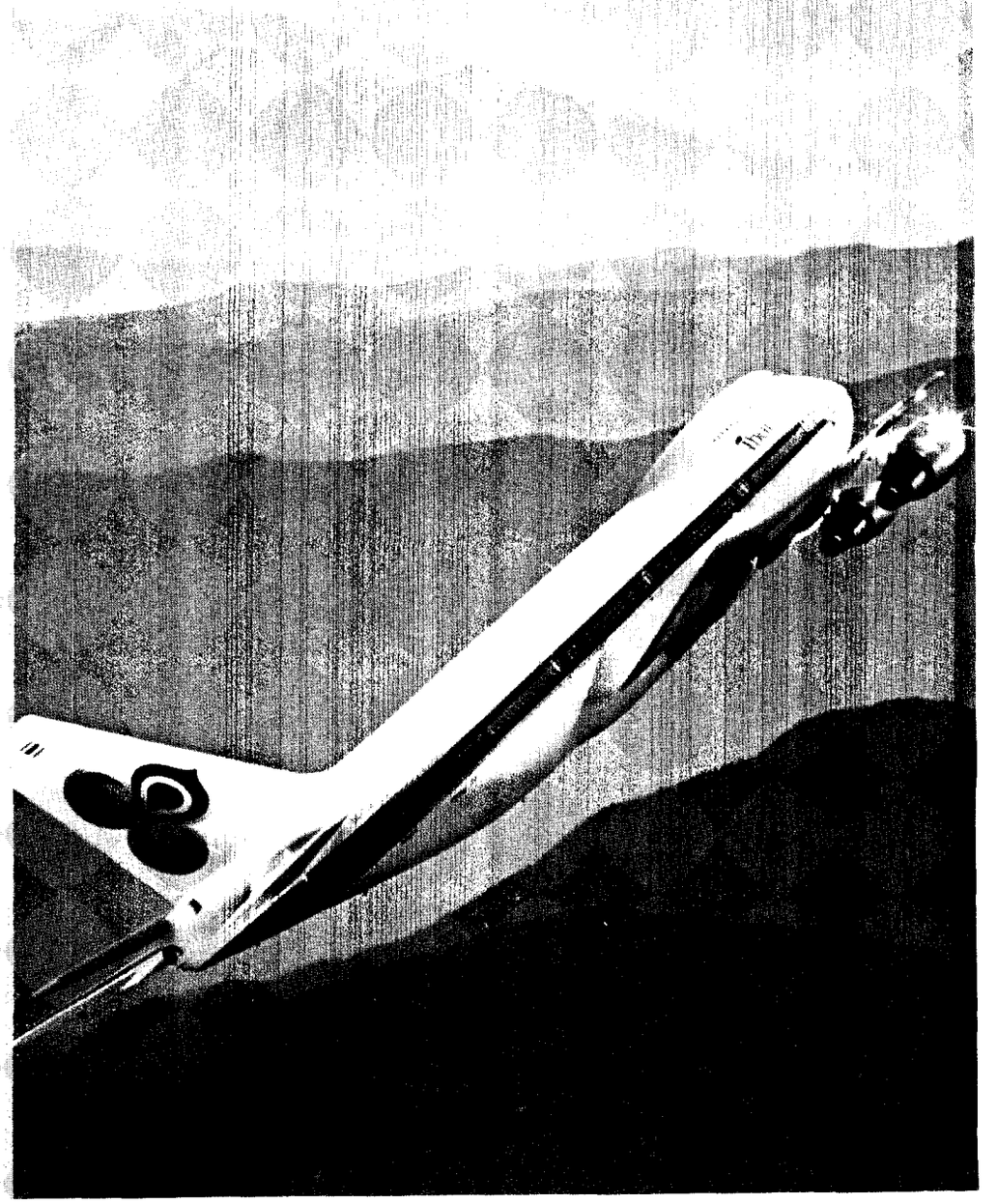

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